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IN THE GOLDEN DAYS BY EDNA LYALL.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. 2.

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By the same Author,

WE TWO	2 vols.
DONOVAN	2 vols.

IN THE GOLDEN DAYS

BY

EDNA LYALL,

AUTHOR OF "WE TWO," "DONOVAN," ETC.

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LEIPZIG

BERNHARD TAUCHNITZ

1890.

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CONTENTS

OF VOLUME II.

			Page
CHAPTER	I.	A terrible Night	7
—	II.	Griffith doubtfully regards Hugo	20
—	III.	Sydney and Betterton	38
—	IV.	A Midnight Escape	48
—	V.	At the national Thanksgiving	56
—	VI.	Randolph's Remorse	69
—	VII.	Cleveland House	79
—	VIII.	The Trial	86
—	IX.	Temptation	90
—	X.	Hugo's last Day	114
—	XI.	Joyce's Journal	128
—	XII.	Woman's Work	138
—	XIII.	The seventh of December	151
—	XIV.	"Love is Lord of all"	165
—	XV.	The Duchess of Grafton	178

			Page
CHAPTER	XVI.	Francis Bampfield, Saint	189
—	XVII.	Hopes and Fears	198
—	XVIII.	Suspense	216
—	XIX.	Under the Apple-Trees	236
—	XX.	An unexpected Arrival	249
—	XXI.	Joyce's Journal	255
—	XXII.	The "Briloft"	268
—	XXIII.	Reconciled	280

IN THE GOLDEN DAYS.

CHAPTER I.

A TERRIBLE NIGHT.

Come sleep, oh, sleep, the certain knot of peace,
The baiting-place of wit, the balm of woe,
The poor man's wealth, the prisoner's release,
The indifferent judge between the high and low;
With shield of proof shield me from out the prease
Of those fierce darts despair at me doth throw;
Oh, make in me those civil wars to cease;
I will good tribute pay if thou do so.

SIR PHILIP SYDNEY.

THE horses, still bearing the marks of hard riding, stood in waiting at the door of the inn. There was a confusion of many voices, many feet, many wheels, and many street cries. Hugo was vaguely conscious of it all as he was led forth. Another high clear voice was calling, "Strawberries, ripe strawberries!"

A plaintive looking girl was trailing along with a large basket calling "Rosemary and briar! rosemary and briar!"

"What!" exclaimed one and another in the group gathered to watch the horses. "One of the plot men, say you?" "A Rye-House man!" "A rogue!" "A traitor!" "Lord save us! but he's a fine young spark!" "Look you, there he comes. Rare and pale too, one would a thought they had most racked un." "Lord love ye, they can't put un to the torture now! not except in Scotland with Lauderdale." "But a stripling he be; naught but a stripling!" "Down with all traitors, say I—and long live the King!"

This led to a small outburst of loyalty, and amid a storm of mingled cheers and groans, and a shower of stones and refuse from which the burly constable did his best to shelter the prisoner, Hugo was led off in the direction of Newgate.

And now they had left Cornhill behind them, and were making their way through crowded Cheapside. Now they caught a passing glimpse of the busy masons and builders at work on new St. Paul's, and now gloomy Newgate Street lay before them. At last the grim pile itself loomed into sight; they paused before the grisly-looking gate. Hugo was dimly aware that the burly constable carried in his belongings,—the valise which had been left at Longbridge Hall, and the lute case. He wondered what would become of them, he vaguely wondered what would become of himself; he followed mechanically, a constable on each side of him, and the chief constable in advance, while an official took them into a small room, where the governor of Newgate was waiting to interview them. It was only by an intolerable effort that he roused himself sufficiently to answer

the questions which were put to him. Then after a few minutes the men who had hitherto been his guardians prepared to leave. He roused himself again, bade them good day, and thanked them for their courtesy. He became conscious that he was alone in this horrible place,— that his last friends had left him— that Randolph had finally deserted him and that he was at the mercy of a brute.

The governor regarded him fixedly for a minute, evidently taking his measure. Then he made an entry in a large book upon the table, and struck a bell which stood beside him, upon which an official appeared at the door.

"Twenty pound fetters," said the governor, "and one of the prisoners to rivet them."

The man disappeared,—Hugo stood motionless, the expression of his face not one whit altered. The governor regarded him again and yet more keenly. "Cool customer," he remarked, "will need discipline!"

The door opened again, a gaoler entered, a man with small twinkling eyes and shaggy hair, carrying the keys of his office. He was followed by a much more repulsive-looking prisoner, who bore the heavy irons which the governor had ordered. Without a word Hugo submitted to necessity and allowed the chains to be riveted upon his ankles. Just at the time he minded the touch of the dirty prisoner's hands more than the irons themselves. Meanwhile the governor was giving directions to the gaoler, and Hugo saw a gleam of fiendish amusement pass over the features of the prisoner who was still busy with his fetters. This some-

how nettled him, stung into life his desire for resistance. He faced round upon the governor.

"What right have you to load me with irons before trial, sir?" he asked, with far more strength and fire in his manner than the man had given him credit for.

"Right!" roared the governor, with a brutal laugh. "Odds-fish! to hear the young spark! Why, bless your young innocence, you've no 'right' in Newgate!"

"How about the Habeas Corpus Act, sir?" said Hugo, calmly.

The governor smiled, but more respectfully.

"Ah, 'tis true, you have me there, young sir. There is that cursed Habeas Corpus, and a bad day it was for merry England when that was made law—defrauding honest gaolers of their due, and favouring knaves and vagabonds. We were better off in Newgate four years ago, when those meddlesome Commons left us to ourselves, weren't we, Scroop?"

The gaoler acquiesced with a sardonic grin—the governor broke again into loud brutal laughter.

"Well, well," he said, after a minute, recovering himself. "We waste time, and time don't crawl to the governor of Newgate, whatsoever it do to the prisoners. Away with him, Scroop—discipline and the dungeon."

And with this terse, alliterative, and alluring sentence, Hugo found himself dismissed.

Scroop dragged him along interminable and dingy passages, the very air of which seemed laden with all that was foul and lowering. When he stumbled, as he very frequently did from weariness and the weight of the irons about his feet, the gaoler swore at him.

"I'd have you know, sir, that there be such things

as whips in Newgate," he said, with a savage grin. "Ay, and prisoners to wield them, too, with right good will on their mates."

"I have had enough of thrashings though for many a day to come," said Hugo smiling a little. "And it is scarcely reasonable to growl when you have laden me with such fetters."

Something in his tone made the gaoler turn and look at him more attentively than he had yet done. Brutal as the man was, he could yet perceive that the prisoner was somehow different from any prisoner with whom he had yet come into contact. He swore no more, he walked more slowly, for the first time in his life he wondered. What was there about this new-comer that appealed to him so strangely? Silently he helped him down a flight of stone steps, at the foot of which he paused to unlock a narrow door. As it swung back, dismally creaking on its hinges, there was a sound of rushing, thumping, scrambling within.

"Rats!" said Scroop, laconically. "But they'll not attack you, sir, an you leave them alone! Plenty of garbage for them to feed on in Newgate!" he laughed grimly.

Hugo glanced round. The wretched little cell was absolutely bare, save that in one place the grey flag-stones were slightly raised as though to form a bed, and another stone was laid across at the head for a pillow. The walls were reeking with damp, the atmosphere was insufferable, what little air and light there was, came from a small grating which opened into a passage at the foot of the stairs. He was past complaining, however. He just dropped down on the stone

bed without a word. The gaoler stood perplexed—he was not used to this sort of thing.

"Well, for a hard bed your honour seems to take it pretty easy!" he said, regarding him curiously.

"Water—for God's sake!" said Hugo, faintly.

Scroop hesitated a moment, looked again at him fixedly, and finally walked away, returning before long with a pitcher of water and a hunch of bread, which he set down on the floor beside the prisoner. Then without another word he went out closing the door noisily behind him. Hugo involuntarily shuddered as the key grated in the rusty lock. It roused him, however, and he sat up and drank thirstily, then once more fell back on his stony couch too weary as yet to eat, though the bread, for which a few hours before he would have given much, stood on the floor beside him. But the delay proved fatal, for not many minutes after he was roused from a state of stupor by the sound of pattering feet, and looking up he saw that three fat, brown rats were at work upon the bread, gnawing, nibbling, fighting over it. He found himself idly speculating what they would do when it was eaten, but as to moving a finger, driving them off, rescuing the bread or eating it afterwards, no power on earth could have made him do it.

Gradually the little light that had crept in through the grating faded away, the cell became quite dark; he could no longer watch the rats, he could only hear them and occasionally feel them as they scampered about the place; their noise kept him from sleeping, their frequent raids kept him in an uncomfortable state of wakeful suspense. One thing was very clear to him: the lifelong imprisonment, if it was to be in this cell,

would not be of very long duration. He wondered whether death would free him that night; wondered whether dying hurt much, wondered whether this strange sinking, this feeling of being dragged down, down, endlessly down might perhaps be the beginning of the end.

All at once the sound of a human voice made him start violently. He sat up, and tried to make out in the murky darkness where the speaker could be.

"Art weary of life?" said the voice.

"In these quarters, ay, verily," replied Hugo.

"You can change them this moment, an you will," said the voice.

He thought that it came from the grating, and was somewhat reassured.

"How can that be? Tell me for the love of God!" he exclaimed.

"Nay," said the voice. "But for the love of gold."

"Money!" exclaimed Hugo. "Can that take me out this accursed place."

"It can take you to a dry and spacious room, and give you a bed fit for a Christian to lie on; it can give you food and wine, and it can lighten your fetters."

"Ten gold pieces," exclaimed Hugo, eagerly, "if you will but take me hence!"

There was a sound of laughter; it was like a mocking fiend.

"Ten guineas! No, my duck, you don't stir under twenty."

"Twenty!" Hugo mused a minute. All the money he had in the world was the fifty guineas which Randolph had given him at Longbridge Hall. He must

not stake the whole of this even for his release and better quarters. "Well then twenty guineas."

"Twenty guineas will but take you to the common ward; 'tis full to-night, they be packed close as herrings in a tub!"

"Then will I most assuredly stay here," said Hugo resolutely.

He fell back again on the stones.

"But," said the voice, "an you stay in this damp hole, you're not long for this world. The toughest can but stand it a few weeks. You're signing your own death-warrant and all for the sake of a few guineas more or less. Now for sixty guineas I'll get you into the press yard where you can live like a prince, have your fine friends to visit you by day and feed upon the fat of the land."

"I can't pay it," said Hugo; "I haven't such a sum in the world."

There was truth in his voice. The invisible being knew that he must reduce his terms.

"Well, then, let us say fifty and end the haggling."

"Nay," said Hugo, "'tis impossible; leave me and torment me not further."

"Well, since you will have it," said the voice. Then again after a pause, "One more chance. There's the castle—fine, airy rooms, plenty of light, good food, though not so good as the press yard; I'll get you a private chamber in the castle, if you will give me forty gold pieces."

"Agreed!" said Hugo, catching at the first proposal which it was really in his power to accept. He took the sum named from his purse, and Scroop, hearing

the chink of the gold pieces, lost no time in unlocking the door and helping the prisoner—almost carrying him, in fact—up the stone steps which led from his dungeon.

"Nat!" he roared, in his stentorian voice "bring the fetters!"

The vaulted passage rang and echoed, dismally returning the last word. Nat came scurrying along with a lantern in one hand and his implements in the other. He was the same evil-looking prisoner who had been employed to rivet the twenty-pound irons, and he grinned derisively at Hugo as he proceeded to release him and to fasten instead round his ankles a far lighter pair of shackles in which he could move with very little discomfort. When this was done Scroop took him by the arm and led him along labyrinths of stone passages, which he could but dimly perceive by the flickering light of the lantern.

"The common debtors' side!" said Scroop, jerking his thumb in the direction of a large door, "and the common felons!" He nodded his head in the opposite direction.

Their course seemed to lie midway between the two, and Hugo was relieved to find himself in a less noisome atmosphere. Scroop dragged him up flight after flight of stone stairs, and at length paused before a narrow door which he proceeded to unlock.

"You may thank your stars, young sir," he said, gloomily, "that I let you out on such low terms. Mark my words! many don't get such quarters as these under five hundred pounds."

Hugo wondered what princely accommodation was

about to be offered him, and was not unreasonably wrathful when he found that this private room was of the smallest, and was fitted with three barrack beds, two of which were already occupied.

He looked at the two sleeping forms. What might they not be?" Murderers, for aught he knew! Surely the dungeon and the rats with solitude would have been preferable to this!

"'Tis over-late to see to the bedding to-night," said Scroop, indicating the vacant plank bed. "You will be softer than stones, anyway, and to-morrow you can have a flock mattress, an you like to pay a crown for it a fortnight."

The occupant of one of the beds stirred a little, and finally turned round to look at these disturbers of his night's rest.

"Is this what you call a private chamber!" said Hugo, wrathfully. And, with a deep oath, he dragged himself across the room and flung himself down upon the barrack bed.

Scroop regarded him for a moment with a sarcastic grin, then shrugging his shoulders left the cell without any further remark, locking and bolting the door with ostentatious noisiness which was not lost upon Hugo.

Disappointed as he was with his new quarters, however, to be free from the rats was a great gain. His two companions were silent enough, the room was dark, and Hugo, though wretched both in mind and body, was too young to lie awake long.

He slept soundly for some hours. When he awoke the room was dimly lighted by the pale moonbeams which struggled in through the small window. He

looked round, fancying himself at Mondisfield; he stared at the heavy iron bars across the window, which stood out black and hard against the moonlight. It was not Mondisfield! Where was it? With a vague uneasiness he started up, but instantly felt the fetters upon his ankles. It was not Mondisfield! Good God! it was Newgate!

Once more he heard Randolph's cold voice, "Are you aware that the penalty for misprision of treason is imprisonment for life?" And fiends' voices seemed to take up the words and echo them in a jeering chorus, "Here for life, for life! Here for life!"

He sprang up in a sort of frenzy—he struggled vainly to reach the barred but unglazed window high up in the wall from which the cool night air blew in. He rushed at the door, he pulled, strained, dragged it, as though by all his endeavours it could be induced to move a hairsbreadth. What was reason to one who had realised the meaning of lifelong imprisonment! The door must yield! Were mere wood and iron to prove more powerful than the passionate craving for freedom which seemed to rend his being? Once more back to the window, once more a perception that it was hopeless; then back to the door and the unavailing struggle with the merciless lock, which all his efforts would not so much as shake. It was all vain—vain! And he was here for life!

With a stifled cry, he threw himself face downwards on the floor. Effort was useless, and yet this awful craving to get out seemed as though its fierceness would kill him. Panting, exhausted with the bodily exertion, and torn in pieces by that terrible revolt against his

fate, he might have lain there for hours had not a voice fallen upon his ears and startled him into attention. Was it his fancy? Was it merely the recollection of some psalm he had heard at Mondisfield?

"What if in prison I must dwell,
May I not there converse with Thee?
Save me from sin, Thy wrath and hell,
Call me Thy child, and I am free.
No bolts or bars can keep Thee out,
None can confine a holy soul,
The streets of heaven it walks about,
None may its liberties control."

"Whose words are those?" he exclaimed, quieted for a moment, partly because they seemed like a message from Mondisfield, partly because there was something soothing in the rhythm and in the tone of the voice.

"The words are Mr. Richard Baxter's," said the voice. "And I, who speak them, am one Francis Bampfield, a prisoner for conscience' sake."

With that the speaker rose, felt about for flint and steel, and in a minute had kindled a rushlight; then he came and bent over the prostrate form of his fellow-prisoner.

"I heard not your entrance, sir," he said. "I slept soundly. Is there aught that I can do for you? You seem in sore distress."

"Distress!" exclaimed Hugo, half raising himself and looking into the face of the old man who bent over him. "I am in prison for life, sir—for life!" He broke into a discordant laugh, which speedily changed to uncontrollable sobbing, as he fell back once more into his former position.

"I, too, am in prison for life," said Bampfield. "Be comforted; 'twill prove less irksome than you think for."

"No, no!" cried Hugo, starting up again. "You are old, sir, or you could not say so. Oh! for the love of God, sir, tell me is there no hope of escape? I must get out, or I shall die!"

The old frenzy was returning; once more he rushed blindly at the door as though he would tear it from its hinges. Bampfield watched him for a minute with silent compassion; then, going up to him, he drew him away with gentle force, which Hugo was in no state to resist.

"You look both ill and weary," he said, in his quiet, measured tones. "An you will put up with it, my bed is at your service. Lie down—slumber will do more for you than I can."

Hugo's native courtesy returned to him, and in a voice which contrasted oddly with that of his passionate outbreak, he thanked Bampfield for his kindness, but would not hear of robbing him of his bed. However, the old man was not to be resisted. He took the law into his own hands, made Hugo lie down, fetched him food and water, and forced him to swallow them, talking the while in a soothing, continuous sort of way.

"Yes, as you say, I am old," he remarked—"old enough, I trow, to be your grandsire. But you will accord me an old man's privilege, and hearken to my experience. Black times you may have, but, believe me, none so black as the first night in gaol. Believe me, sir, there is naught so hard but custom lightens it. I speak not from hearsay; I speak that which I know, having been oft in gaol, and for long years. Men may

imprison your body, but no man can against your will imprison you."

Hugo was silent, musing over the words which fell strangely on his ear, since he was not accustomed to think much about any such matters as Bampfield hinted at.

The old man watched him keenly, wondering what crime had brought upon him so terrible a punishment. The pure face with its beautiful outlines, the dark grey eyes with their deep, thoughtful look, did not lend themselves readily to the idea of any crime at all. But he was too much of a gentleman to ask him any question, and indeed before long he saw that the new prisoner had fallen asleep, much as a child does after an outburst of passion. He did not realise how wonderful had been the relief of his presence, or what an immense influence his mere age possessed for one of Hugo's reverential nature. But he felt strangely drawn towards this new occupant of his prison-cell, and unspeakably thankful that one, who would effect no slight change in the monotonous life, bid fair to prove a welcome addition to their number.

CHAPTER II.

GRIFFITH DOUBTFULLY REGARDS HUGO.

Suspicions among thoughts are like bats among birds, they ever fly by twilight. BACON.

IT was broad daylight when John Griffith, minister of Dunnings Alley Chapel, Bishopsgate Street, awoke. He glanced sleepily across the prison-cell, vaguely won-

dering whether his friend Bampfield had yet risen, and perceiving some curious change as he looked, he rubbed his eyes vigorously, and looked again. Why, what was this? Instead of a hoary head there was a mass of curly light brown hair. Where had his friend gone to? And who was this new-comer? He rose hastily, but his curiosity had to remain unsatisfied, for he perceived that Bampfield was at his devotions at the further end of the cell, and the stranger slept as if nothing on earth would wake him. Griffith was almost irritated by the sight of his peaceful repose. This must be the graceless gallant who had stumbled in, likely enough half-drunk, the night before; he remembered the incident well enough now, and he remembered, too, the deep oath which he had uttered as he flung himself down upon the vacant bed. How he had managed to obtain possession of Bampfield's quarters was a mystery, and Griffith grudged them to him, and was not at all inclined to wish this intruder welcome.

"How now, Bampfield!" he exclaimed, as the old man rose from his knees; "have you been sleeping on boards? And did this godless, drunken blasphemer turn you from your own bed?"

Bampfield smiled.

"Gently, good friend Griffith," he said. "Methinks those epithets scarce apply to our new friend."

"Friend!" said Griffith, looking with scorn at the gay crimson doublet which the stranger had thrown off, and the costly lace cravat which lay beside it. "Friend! Bampfield! Nay, but a godless Whitehall idler, an I mistake not. You slept last night when he entered, but

I saw him stagger in, drunk, no doubt, and swearing at the gaoler with profane lips."

"Nay, he was not drunk, poor lad, but ill, and weary, and half-starved. Courtier, idler, swearer, he may be, yet is there a grace and winsomeness about him which methinks is not all court breeding."

"You would see good in every living soul!" said Griffith, impatiently; "I shall form my own judgment upon him. Is he like to remain here long?"

"I trow that he will outlast both of us," said Bampfield, with a curiously pathetic smile. "We are old and grey-headed, but yon poor boy is but nineteen, or at most twenty, and he too, has lifelong imprisonment to face. I found him heart-broken last night, tearing and straining at the door as though he would open it or die."

"Whereupon you offered him your bed," said Griffith; "and the grace and winsomeness of which you speak did not hinder the profane worldling from letting a venerable man of seventy sleep on a plank bed."

"You wrong him," said Bampfield. "I forced him to take it; nor could I have slept after witnessing so sad a scene. I had better employment."

"I have no patience with the rising generation!" said Griffith, vehemently. He could not add that he had no patience with his friend for spending half the night in prayer over the sorrows of an unknown stranger, but he relieved himself by inveighing against the depravity of youth in general, and of this youth in particular.

Hugo, disturbed by the voices, was struggling to wake up; he had heard the last part of the conversation

in a half dreamy state, and Griffith's vehement generality made him open his eyes. He looked round and saw a tall, gaunt, grey-haired man with a stern and hard expression. He was clad in the habit of a divine, and though he was beyond doubt a very worthy man, and though Hugo was quite aware of the fact, and was conscious, too, that he ought to be thankful enough to find himself in such good company, he, nevertheless, formed the strongest aversion to Dr. John Griffith at first sight.

"I wish you a good morning, sir," said Griffith, bowing stiffly. "Had I known that you were in need last night, I should gladly have afforded you any assistance in my power. But you entered this cell with profane words, to which, I bless God, these walls have not of late echoed."

Now in those days swearing was a cultivated art; it was considered part of good breeding. Hugo, being of a quiet nature, and more given to thinking than to talking, probably swore much less than most men; he had indeed been many a time taken to task by Randolph and by Denham for his want of brilliancy in this respect. To be now reproved for a single oath under exceptionally trying circumstances amazed him. Moreover, he resented the interference.

"I am sorry to have disturbed you, sir," he replied, coldly. "As to modes of speech, my tongue is my own."

He tried to rise, but fell back again with an irrepressible exclamation of pain. Bampfield, who had listened with regret to the words which had passed between his companions, now drew near to the bedside.

"Are you rested?" he asked, kindly. "Nay, I see you are still but weary."

"I have to thank you for some hours of forgetfulness," said Hugo, looking up at him gratefully.

"Are you in prison for crime, or for conscience' sake?" asked Griffith, sternly.

"For both, sir," said Hugo, flushing painfully.

Griffith regarded him for a moment in silence.

"That is impossible!" he said, with stern emphasis. "Impossible, sir!"

An indescribable look stole over Hugo's face; he glanced at Bampfield as though to appeal to him against this hard verdict.

"You are still very weary?" questioned Bampfield. "Is there naught that we can do for you?"

"I don't know," said Hugo, frowning with pain. "I am beaten almost to a jelly."

"Ha! how was that?" said Griffith, with sudden interest, for he was a doctor of medicine as well as a divine. Then, his old antagonism to Hugo returning—"But perhaps you deserved it."

The muscles of the new-comer's face worked convulsively; this ruthless handling of an old wound was hard to bear.

"I—did deserve it," he said, in a low voice, and therewith turned his face from the light, and was deaf to all other questions.

Bampfield looked reproachfully at his companion, and John Griffith softened a little towards the new-comer, reflected that he might have repented of his crime, and, turning away, began vigorously to make preparations for breakfast.

However, though Griffith's question had been heartless, it proved to be exactly the tonic which Hugo

needed. Bampfield's kindness had saved him from blank despair, but that sharp, that torturing "Perhaps you deserved it," recalled to him the past, and with the hatred of the past an almost passionate resolve that the future should be very different. What was it that had made him sink so low that night at Mondisfield? Love of life had, in truth, proved strong, but it was not merely love of life which had made him yield. Had another man held a pistol to his head, and given him the choice between death and crime, he would have assuredly chosen death. The power had lain not in the pistol, but in Randolph; not in the mere thought of death, but in the thought of a violent death at his brother's hands.

He had allowed himself to be held in bondage by that stronger nature. Randolph had been to him as a god, and he, by yielding with tame and blind submission, by ceding to another what he had no right to cede—the direction of his will and his conscience—had proved himself to be less than a man. It flashed upon him as a sort of discovery that words which he had heard in a lifeless, mechanical way, were no poetical image but a stern reality, a fact as true for him in the seventeenth century as, long ago, to the listeners on the Eastern mountain-side. "No man can serve two masters." He would, to begin with, forfeit the right to be called "man" at all—would be a mere cipher, an incarnate compromise; and ultimately he must by the very nature of things give himself wholly either to one or the other, either to the right master or the wrong. He knew well enough that he had of late vaguely desired to do right, that for months he had been also drawn, almost

irresistibly, more and more under Randolph's influence. He had been sorely perplexed by the clashing of duties, but at the fatal moment had been quite well aware that he had deliberately chosen amiss.

It was not, however, till this miserable morning in Newgate that he saw all things clearly; realised that there is only one Master whom a man can serve without sinking into degrading slavery, only one Master whose service is perfect freedom. The old church prayer returned to his mind, the Latin version of which had till now been an enigma to him—

"Quem nosse vivere.
Cui servire regnare."

And hitherto he had not "Served," but had been dragged down by the power of circumstance, hitherto he had not "Reigned," overcoming by virtue of the Truth and the Right; he had lived in a despicable slavery—nay, scarcely lived at all, so vague and misty had been his knowledge.

To pass from a shadowy belief in a sort of Fetish, to actual knowledge of a Living Being, is like passing from death into life—like throwing wide a closed casement, and letting the fresh air revive one panting for breath.

It seemed to Hugo as though the purity of Joyce, the charity of Bampfield, the thoughtful friendship of Mary Denham, the free forgiveness of Colonel Wharncliffe, blended together and helped him to a vision of One whom he had vowed to serve manfully but had not served—One whom he had vaguely worshipped but never before known.

Time, then, was nothing—place was nothing!

Bampfield had spoken truly—men might imprison the body, but here in Newgate one might "Know" and "Live,"—might "Serve" and "Reign." He could bear now to say those terrible words which last night had half maddened him,—"Life-long imprisonment,"—could pray as he had never prayed before the words of Mary Denham's collect.

He said no more about being beaten to a jelly, but got up, eager to begin his new life. He paused in tying the cravat which had excited John Griffith's ire to help that worthy, who was in difficulties with a steaming saucepan full of porridge. He stifled his inclination to laugh at the portentous length of the grace which Dr. Griffith pronounced over the very frugal meal, and he accepted Bampfield's offer of hospitality with gratitude, gulping down the tasteless and ill-cooked food with heroic resolution, and inwardly debating whether he might not in course of time improve upon Griffith's cooking, and serve up porridge which savoured less of smoke and the pot.

"Is the food supplied to prisoners?" he asked, anxious to find out what his expenses would be in his new abode.

"A small quantity is supplied," said Bampfield, "but scarce sufficient to keep body and soul together. You can, however, purchase what you will. Nowhere is money a greater power than in prison."

"Ay, that I discovered last night," said Hugo. "It was not till the gaoler had cajoled me out of forty gold pieces that he brought me hither out of a pestilent dungeon."

"They ever get heavy premiums in that way," said

Bampfield, "and even now you will be charged ten shillings and sixpence rental by Scroop, and one shilling each week by the female who cleans the room and makes the fires."

Hugo looked grave. But ten more gold pieces remained within his purse, and if for mere bed and lodging he must pay fourteen shillings a-week his resources would ere long be exhausted. Moreover, there would be his share in lights, and coals and food to be thought of. The money would not last him much more than two months. Two months out of a life-time!

Presently, when Griffith had retired to the further end of the cell to prepare a sermon, Bampfield heard all Hugo's story; he heard the outline of facts that is, and his age and experience, together with an innate perception of the new-comer's character, enabled him to fill in the gaps which necessarily occurred in Hugo's narrative. Nor was it difficult to imagine the extraordinary ascendancy which the elder brother had exercised over the mind of the younger. Puritan as he was, Bampfield nevertheless discerned at once that Hugo was one of the artist type—receptive, responsive, by nature a worshipper; over such a character how easy it was to picture the mastery of a strong man, passionately loved. He could not but hope great things from one who could break such a chain, and Hugo's grief at the separation from Randolph, which was more apparent by what he left unsaid than by any words which he could have uttered, touched the old man deeply.

"Ay," he said, "separation from kith and kin, in belief and practice, is a hard thing to face, but it is

what your Lord bore in His life. 'Even His brethren did not believe in Him.' Many a time those who suffer for conscience' sake will have to heal their smarts with those words."

"And you, sir?" asked Hugo. "Did you, too, have this to bear? Tell me of those imprisonments of which you spoke last night."

"In good sooth, many are the friends whom I have lost," said Bampfield. "Think not that I blame them —nay, oft times thinking over it I blame myself; for did we live as we ought—did not our failings dim the Christ-light—let us hold what opinions we would, folks would be slow to leave us. My tale is but a short and uneventful one. I was born of an old and honourable Devonshire family, and was educated at Wadham in the university of Oxford. My young days were cast in evil times; I was then a loyalist, and an ordained minister of the Church of England. My cure was at Sherbourne in Dorsetshire, and there I continued to read Common Prayer publicly longer than any other minister in Dorsetshire, for which I incurred some danger —it hath been ever my fortune to go with the losing side, you see!"

He smiled, a curiously pathetic smile, which touched Hugo.

"At that time I was also Prebendary of Exeter Cathedral. It was not till lately that I found, as I thought, many matters in the Church which called loudly for reformation. Mr. Richard Baxter was the means of bringing me over to the parliamentary party, and soon after evil days began for us. The King returned, the Act of Uniformity was passed, and there

was naught for me to do but to quit both my living and my prebend, being utterly dissatisfied with the conditions which it imposed. I was from that time forth a marked man, and soon after was apprehended and cast into gaol for worshipping God in my own family. I smile now at the remembrance. There were five-and-twenty of us thrust into one room with but one bed! However, we passed the time peacefully in religious exercises."

"And did they keep you there long?" asked Hugo, with the keen interest of a hearer who can realise the situation.

"Nay, but a short time. However, freedom was not meant for me. I was again apprehended for preaching, for refusing to keep back the message entrusted to me, even though this free land had been bound in slavish chains by laws devised by Clarendon and approved by the King. That time I was in gaol eight years. 'Twas in Dorsetshire gaol, a gruesome place enough."

"Did it seem very long?" asked Hugo, a little huskily.

"It was long, yet I knew that it was not too long—it was the training my Lord thought best for me. Moreover, no one could hinder my preaching in the gaol—I preached every day."

"And when you were liberated?" questioned Hugo.

"Then I wandered about the country again for awhile, gaining a hearing when and where I could, but I was again apprehended and cast into Salisbury gaol. After that, once more freed, I came to London and gathered a congregation first at the chapel in Devon-

shire Square, and later at Pinner's Hall. Last year I was preaching there when there broke in several officers, who dragged me down from my place and carried me off under guard to bring me before the Lord Mayor. I was here in Newgate after that for a time, but being released found myself in worse odour than ever, and shortly afterwards, in March of this year, I and my friend, Dr. Griffith, were both committed to Newgate for refusing the oaths of supremacy and allegiance, and here are we like to remain the rest of our lives."

Hugo mused for a while in silence. The story was perplexing to one of his way of thinking, but no one could for a moment doubt Bampfield's honesty, and what was more, his holiness. He had not yet seen enough of the world to realise that the sins of any body of men sooner or later cause a schism in that body—that the Church by her sins lost many of her bravest and noblest sons, and that those who outside her pale fought against tyranny, and intolerance, and maddening restrictions were fighting on God's side. Instinctively, however, he honoured the zeal for truth, the scrupulous conscientiousness which the Nonconformists had shown; instinctively, too, he realised that he must avoid all controversy, and be content to learn what he could from these two old men, whose experience had been so strange and varied.

Fortunately the beautiful reverence, which was one of his most marked characteristics, stood him now in good stead, and kept peace in the cell where otherwise there must have been discord, seeing that nature and nurture had tuned the three so differently.

Bampfield had only just finished his story when the

door was unlocked and Scroop entered, followed by a surly-looking prisoner, who carried Hugo's valise and lute case. The gaoler directed him to put them down on the barrack-bed which he had alloted last night to the new-comer, and then proceeded in his grim way to enlighten the owner as to various prison rules and regulations. Hugo could hardly listen to the fellow, so impatient was he to open the lute case. When at last the gaoler had departed, he began to tear open the straps and clasps with eager fingers, deaf to Griffith's questions, and mindful only of Joyce. The lid raised, he looked eagerly in and found, securely packed away beside his lute, three books:—a volume containing five of Shakespere's plays; a copy of the *Pilgrim's Progress,* but recently published; and a little edition of St. John's Gospel. On the fly-leaf of this last was written, in a clear, but tremulous handwriting,—

"For my dear love. They are all the books I have."

Tears rushed to Hugo's eyes, a passionate longing consumed him for one more sight of Joyce—Joyce, his sweet, true-hearted love! Joyce who belonged to him, and to whom he belonged by right of that mysterious union of souls which no prison walls—not even the walls of this hellish Newgate—could sever. Unable to see the words which were to him so full of comfort, he pressed the book to his lips and kissed it fervently.

"Sir," said John Griffith, sternly, "I trust you take no rash oath. Tell me, I pray, why you thus irreverently press the holy book to lips which of late spoke profane words."

"Beshrew me, sir, they shall speak such words no

more," said Hugo, quickly, his rapture of love lending him a large generosity, which put up with the doctor's interruption, and made his impatience of the previous night seem contemptible.

Bampfield glanced at him for a moment, a smile of sympathy illumining his worn features. This new-comer was already proving a blessing to him; he had brought an atmosphere of youth, and hope, and love into the dreary cell, which refreshed the old man greatly and relieved the weary monotony of the prison life.

On the Saturday, however, when Hugo, somewhat cheered and already growing accustomed to his new quarters, took his lute and began to play, Bampfield's conscience would not permit him to keep silence.

"My friend," he said, "this is the Sabbath. Will you not keep it with me, and lay aside worldly things?"

Hugo, who would have done anything to please the gentle old man, at once put by the lute and patiently listened to a series of readings and discourses, finishing with a debate between Griffith and Bampfield as to the observance of the seventh, or the first day of the week. But when, on the following day, Griffith took him sternly to task for reading Shakespere, he was less patient. Not being accustomed to the Puritan method of observing Sunday, it seemed to him intolerable to be required all at once to keep both the rest-day of the seventh-day Christian and the rest-day of the Baptist. It needed all his innate courtesy to enable him to pass the two days in a way which should not hurt the feelings of either of the old men, and on the Monday he was so chafed and wearied by the restraint that he felt ready to quarrel with everybody and everything.

It was some relief to be allowed to take an hour's walk. One of the privileges of this part of Newgate consisted in the possession of a paved passage running between the outer wall and the building itself, a dreary enough place paved with purbeck stone, and running to a length of some fifty feet or more. It was something, however, even to be in the open air, within hearing of the life and bustle of Newgate Street, and Hugo walked up and down, working off some of his weariness and despondency by the help of rapid and mechanical exercise.

As he paced to and fro a stranger happened to enter the court at the further end. Visitors frequented Newgate all day long in those times, and consorted freely with the prisoners; for, although the privations and discomforts of prison life in the seventeenth century were much greater than in the present day, there was a sort of rude liberty and license permitted which would scandalise the stern disciplinarians of our time.

The visitor was a man who quickly arrested the attention. There was something unusual about his person and mien which made everyone look a second time at him. He moved with a peculiar ease and dignity, his face was calm, serene, and thoughtful; he seemed to walk the world as an acute observer of men and manners, but there was about him nothing of the censorious critic. Before all things he was sympathetic —in fact he observed everyone with such deep sympathy that he practically lived with them, seeming almost to lose the sense of his own personality, so deeply was he absorbed in the life around him. He leant now against the grim doorway at the entrance to the

paved yard, his easy attitude contrasting curiously with the gait of the downcast prisoner, who tramped doggedly to and fro.

Betterton—for it was none other than the great tragedian—watched every motion of the walker, watched keenly, but with that living sympathy which distinguishes the artist from the scientist.

A slight figure, clad in a crimson cloth doublet, black silk hose, and broad black hat, from which trailed a long yellow ostrich feather; a walk at once dejected and desperate, slightly uneven, too, as though the wayfarer were recovering from some illness; the head bent, the eyes fixed on the ground, the hands clasped behind him, the iron shackles which hung loosely on the shapely ankles clanking dismally at each step. The face he could not clearly see, it was hidden by the wide brim of the hat, until just as the prisoner had taken his third turn up and down some sound made him look up hastily. The actor, to his intense surprise, saw before him the strange, broad-browed face, with the great grey eyes, and the indefinable something which raised it above other faces. There could be no mistake—he was certain that it must be the young amateur tenor, the favourite at Will's, who not many weeks since had been applauded to the echo in very different circumstances. He stepped forward hastily.

"Mr. Wharncliffe!" he exclaimed, holding out his hand.

Hugo clutched at it as a drowning man clutches at a straw. To hear a familiar voice, to see the well-known and kindly face of Betterton in that dismal abode gave him a momentary thrill of rapture. He was

not long in telling the actor all his tale, and Betterton listened with that sympathetic silence which is better far than words.

"What can I do for you?" he said, at the close.

"Tell me first, an you will, what arrests have been made," said Hugo, anxiously.

"Many warrants have been issued," said Betterton. "But I have heard naught of arresting any leading man save Lord Russell."

"Lord Russell!" exclaimed Hugo, in astonishment.

"Ay, he is in the Tower and to be brought to his trial shortly."

"And Colonel Sydney? Heard you aught of him?"

"Nay, he is yet at large. I saw him yesternight, nor have I heard of his being involved in the plot."

"God be thanked!" said Hugo, his face brightening. "You asked what you could do for me, sir. I should be greatly beholden to you an you would go to Colonel Sydney's house, see him privately, and tell him all you have now heard from me."

"I will see him with pleasure," said Betterton. "And at once."

"Tell him, sir, that I will not risk writing, fearing to involve him in danger. But beg him to send me some word of counsel, and, if it may be, one of forgiveness." His voice faltered, he half broke down, but resumed, after a moment's pause, "Tell him I know that I deserve to be despised by him—that I will bear it as a just punishment if it must be. But tell him, too, that I would die for him, that I would live in torture for him. Nay, tell him not that, 'tis like the false disciples who afterwards fled. Tell him no words of

mine, but——" he grasped the actor's arms, looking into his eyes with an entreaty which Betterton never forgot, "but make him understand."

"I will do my best," said Betterton, simply. "I see well what your love for Mr. Sydney is, and can at least tell him of that."

"Ah!" broke in Hugo, "you will never know what he is—never! He has been to me friend, guide, teacher—well-nigh father—to me who was naught to him—naught but a stranger. My God! and it is such an one that men deem cold and harsh—a traitor—one to be hunted from the land he loves!"

"Time's up, sir!" shouted a grim voice.

The agitation, the light of love and devotion died out of Hugo's face, and a stern look settled down upon his features.

"Farewell," he said, grasping Betterton's hand. "Farewell, and thank you."

Then with a curious dignity of obedience he followed his imperious gaoler, and disappeared within the gloomy pile.

The actor watched him out of sight, brushed away a tear from his eyes, and left the prison yard looking graver than when he entered it.

CHAPTER III.

SYDNEY AND BETTERTON.

WILL.—I pray you, what thinks he of our estate?
KING H.—Even as men wrecked upon a sand, that look to be washed off the next tide.

King Henry V.

IT is a curious fact, but a fact borne out by the experience of most people, that the great actors in the drama of life, the characters who take the leading parts and the difficult *rôles,* are, as a rule, calmer and quieter in face of peril and in time of commotion than the lesser men who play humbler parts, and who, while involved in slighter risk, seem to be much more troubled about it. On that bright summer morning which followed Betterton's visit to Newgate most men in any way connected with the Whig party were conscious that they were treading on the brink of a volcano. The bravest could not but be apprehensive at such a time; the most courageous found it hard to live quietly on in their homes knowing that at any moment a pretext might be made for issuing a warrant against them. The country was stirred to its depths by the news of the plot; panic reigned supreme. Yet in Algernon Sydney's study all was calm enough on that Tuesday morning, the 26th of June.

The calmness struck Betterton not a little when, ushered in by Ducasse, he found himself in the presence of the Republican. The room, somewhat meagrely furnished, seemed to bear the owner's history stamped

upon it. It was lacking in the grace and neatness and comfort betokening womanly care. In the prevailing shabbiness there were, nevertheless, tokens that the owner, though poor, was of noble birth, for here and there a bit of cumbrous family plate was to be seen; the Leicester arms were blazoned upon the brown morocco of more than one volume lying on the table, and relics of Penshurst might have been noted among the ordinary furniture of a London house. Present, too, were signs that Sydney was one of the wanderers of the earth. An old trunk full of letters and papers stood open beside the writing-table; a pillow-beer—friend of many a weary journey—lay hard by; while the literary tastes of the patriot were plainly evidenced by what for those days was a large collection of books.

Betterton had a moment in which to take in all these details, and to become conscious of an atmosphere of hard work which pervaded the room. Sydney was so absorbed in his writing that he had not noticed the opening of the door, and his servant crossed the room and mentioned the visitor's name a second time before he looked up. For one moment the actor caught the two faces full in the bright light which streamed in from the window. The face of the faithful valet bearing traces of care and harassing anxiety, the face of the patriot a little sterner than it was wont to be, but pervaded by that majestic calm which seems to be the panoply wherewith strong souls are indued in time of trouble. There flashed across Betterton's mind the description of a noble man in words which he had often spoken upon the stage—

"E'en as just a man as e'er my conversation coped
Withal . . . . That man who is not passion's slave."

It was not often that such an one was to be met with; yet here was a man, even in this vile age, noble of soul and pure of life.

The slight air of hauteur was evidently an inherited expression; it was not in accord either with Sydney's life or with his principles. Moreover, it was only noticeable when the face was in repose. He received the actor with perfect courtesy, which soon deepened into anxious interest and that strange rapid intimacy born of trouble. Hugo could not by any possibility have selected a better messenger than the great tragedian. He told his tale with a simple directness, with a vividness of description, with an absence of personal comment, but with a living sympathy which was irresistible. Sydney was deeply moved, nor did he even for a moment take a harsh view of Hugo's fall. The difficulty and the struggle he had long foreseen, the failure he had half feared, but he had a prophetic consciousness that such a nature as Hugo's would not for ever lie in slavery.

"You will send him the word of counsel he craves?" said the actor.

"Nay, rather I will see him myself," said Sydney, quickly. "Would that I could lay hands on that caitiff brother of his, and give him a piece of my mind. 'Tis passing strange what diverse shoots spring from the same stem."

And he smiled rather bitterly, thinking perhaps of the grave differences which had been the cause of so

much strife and contention between him and both his brothers.

"Pardon me," said Betterton, "but will not a visit from you be a source of mutual danger? To bring you into any risk would be small satisfaction to Mr. Wharncliffe."

"You are right," said Sydney, "I spoke hastily, forgetting that we live in an age which maketh truth pass for treason. Ay, I must not visit him, 'twould make his lot harder. Yet, poor lad, I would fain have spoken with him. Hugo is one of those who are over-pure for the age they live in, and, from Him of Nazareth downwards, life is hard to such."

"If there be aught that I can do in the way of bearing message or letter I am entirely at your disposal," said Betterton.

"I am very sensible of your courtesy," said Sydney. "Perchance that were the best way, at least till the worst of this panic hath passed by. I will write to him at once, for indeed—*carpe diem*—who can tell but that I may be even as he ere the sun goes down."

He smiled sadly, but with the calmness of one who has passed a lifetime in constant risks and perils.

"You deem yourself indeed in danger, sir?" asked Betterton, marvelling at the serenity with which such words had been spoken.

"I have never known what it is to be out of danger, Mr. Betterton, for these many years," replied Sydney. "When I only looked over a balcony to see what passed at the election of the sheriffs, I was indicted for a riot. And I am well-informed that had the Meal Tub Sham succeeded, I should have been involved in it."

"Yet such a scheme would have sorted ill with your liking, sir."

"In truth you say well," said Sydney, with a bitter smile. "As I told His Majesty at Whitehall, nothing could be more repugnant to my feeling than a measure which must eventually unite the papists and the crown. But he that is unpopular must not look for justice in our land. For such an one there is naught but exile."

"Will you not once more be warned, and make good your escape?" said the tragedian.

"You echo the words that my faithful valet dins into my ears day and night," said Sydney. "But look you, Mr. Betterton, I am growing old, and I am weary of these endless precautions, and exile is hateful to me, and my country over dear. If I flee I shall but leave my heart behind me. That may answer at five-and-twenty, but at sixty it is not so well. Now, an you will permit me, I will pen a note to young Mr. Wharncliffe."

He sat down at his writing-table, leaving the actor time for a further study of the room and its owner, this dauntless patriot, whose lot it had been to win the undying hatred of the court party, the fear of all half-hearted and timid men, and the fervent devoted love of a very few. Presently he drew forth his purse, examining its contents, with the air of one who is accustomed to find it lighter than might be wished. He had in truth known what it was to be "poor even to misery," and though at present able to live upon the small sum which his father had left him, and which after long legal disputes had at length been pronounced

his, he would fain have sent much more substantial help to Hugo than was at all within his power.

"You will then kindly be the bearer of this letter and purse," he said, turning to Betterton. "I am very grateful to you for your help. As to the purse, he must accept it as from a father. I see plainly enough that his brother's aim will be to keep him in such sore discomfort that he shall at length succumb and own what he knows. Tell him he must use the money to defeat that unjust end, so will his independence not be wounded or his pride offended."

Then, with a few more words of gratitude, a last message for Hugo, a finely turned compliment which, for all his ordinary bluntness of speech, proved the Republican to be a polished man of the world, Betterton found his mission ended, and the interview over.

After he had left the house, Sydney paced to and fro in his study for some time, wrapped in anxious thought. Hugo was very much upon his mind, for he felt a great responsibility for him, knowing well how large a share he had had in forming his character and his opinions. Betterton's description of the prisoner returned to him again and again, and ever with a fresh pang of sorrow and regret. There was something indescribably mournful to him in the thought of that young life doomed to long imprisonment. After a while Ducasse entered and began to lay the table for the one-o'clock dinner, and Sydney sat down and began to eat, more to please the faithful servant than because he had any appetite. Troubles were thickening day by day, and he was heavy of heart.

"Ah, sir," said Ducasse, "I could have made you a

better omelette than this, an we were once more in France."

"All things are best there in thy mind, from thy master down to eggs and poultry," said Sydney, smiling. "But I am growing old, Ducasse, and would fain end my days here, even though things right themselves but slowly in our foggy island."

"Ah, sir," said the valet, "'tis ever 'the land, the land' you speak of. But of what use is the land, if monsieur's countrymen will but give him a six-foot strip in a cemetery, or perchance so much as will serve for a prison cell. Ah, sir, think of yourself, and flee while yet there is time."

"But look you, Joseph, in France I do but vegetate to no profit. Whereas here I may perchance serve my country, if free, in a hundred ways; if in prison, as an ensample to future ages; if on the scaffold, as one of the martyrs from whose blood shall spring one day our true Republic."

"Ah, sir, it is of yourself that I think," said the valet, sadly.

"Thou art but a Frenchman, after all, Joseph! Yet, methinks, after these long years we have lived together, thou shouldst know me better," said Sydney, smiling. "Hark, there is a knock without. Go, see who calls. I have as little stomach for visitors as for my dinner this morning."

Ducasse left the room, and Sydney let his knife and fork lie idle for a minute, leaning back in his chair with the air of one who is glad for once to be free from even friendly inspection. An intense quietness reigned in the room,—one of those timeless pauses

which occur sometimes in life; for the moment his brain was at rest, his anxious thoughts were lulled; a breath of soft, warm June air floated in from the open window, and gave him a distinct feeling of pleasure; a bee went buzzing about the room, and finally settled upon his plate. Outside there were voices, but he did not heed them; outside were steps, — but what then? Ducasse, perhaps, had not been able to get rid of some importunate visitor. The door was thrown open, he glanced round. What did it all mean? The valet stood there with blanched face, and announced nobody,— yet the footsteps drew nearer, an officer entered, bowed slightly, advanced and touched him on the shoulder.

All at once that strange hush was broken, the stillness, the calm, the timeless pause ended, and the room seemed in a tumult, above which there rang, sharply and gratingly, the words,

"Algernon Sydney, I arrest thee in the King's name on a charge of high treason."

With a swift pang, he realised that the minute of intense stillness had been his last minute of freedom in this world, and involuntarily his eyes followed the bee, as, alarmed by the noise and the sudden intrusion of officers and men, it flew noisily round the room and out beyond through the open window.

A fresh knock without, and yet another unwelcome visitor. Sir Philip Lloyd entered, greeting the prisoner courteously enough.

"I have an order, Mr. Sydney, to seize all papers found within your house," he said. "And I must therefore search the premises."

Sydney bowed acquiescence.

"Lay covers for two," he said, turning to Ducasse. "These gentlemen will dine with me—unless,"—turning to Sir Philip Lloyd—"you think it not meet to take salt with one arrested on such a charge?"

There was a sort of veiled irony in his tone, but the officers could not well refuse his hospitality, and the strange trio sat down to the table, and Ducasse waited on them, having much ado to keep his eyes clear enough to see the plates and dishes. Everyone, save the Republican himself, seemed embarrassed. Throughout the meal he maintained a stately composure, talking with the officers as though they had been ordinary guests, and apparently doing his best to set them at their ease. Perhaps, however, their abashed manner was not altogether ungrateful to him, and he was quite human enough to enjoy the consciousness of being master of the situation.

Dinner over, Sir Philip Lloyd, nothing loth, set about the more congenial task of searching the house. What papers there were, however, were all in the study, and after a vain quest in the upper regions he returned, and began to ransack the drawers and cupboards of an oaken cabinet, while his men seized upon the papers lying on the writing-table, and stowed them away with the others in the open trunk and the pillow-beer.

This part of the proceedings tried Sydney's patience considerably. His dark eyes flashed as he noted the seizure by these strangers of all that was most private to him. Ducasse could see that his master had much ado to keep back a torrent of angry remonstrance. He held his peace, however, sitting somewhat rigidly in his

high-backed chair at the dinner-table, and only following every movement with lynx eyes.

At length Sir Philip had made what selection of papers he deemed fit, a cord was placed round both the trunk and the pillow-beer, and Ducasse was despatched for wax and candle. The men dragged forward the heavy package.

"Bring the light hither," said Sir Philip; and the valet doing as he was bid, held the wax and the light close to his master.

"What is this for?" asked Sydney, with a shade of hauteur in his tone.

"I desire that you put your seal upon these papers, Mr. Sydney," said Sir Philip. "They shall not be opened but in your presence."

Sydney drew the signet-ring from his finger, but then hesitated. Had not something of this sort passed at Colonel Mansell's rooms, when he was accused of complicity in the Meal Tub Plot? And had not those who searched contrived to slip a treasonable paper in among the private documents?

"You will affix your seal in this place," said Sir Philip, in a voice of authority, and indicating the knotted cord.

"Pardon me, sir, I shall do nothing of the kind," said Sydney, with asperity. And, while everyone stared at him, he put his ring on again with great calmness and deliberation.

Sir Philip shrugged his shoulders, and, looking but ill pleased, put his own seal upon the cord.

"As you please, Mr. Sydney," he said, coldly. "We did but consult your own convenience. A coach is in

waiting, and we must make no further delay, since you are to be examined before the Privy Council."

Sydney bowed.

"My hat and cloak, Joseph." Then, as the valet returned, he spoke a few words of gratitude and affection to him in his native tongue, grasped his hand, bade him God-speed, and turned abruptly towards his captors. "Gentlemen I am ready. Bear me whither you will."

CHAPTER VI.

A MIDNIGHT ESCAPE.

I shall not want false witness to condemn me,
Nor store of treasons to augment my guilt;
The ancient proverb will be well effected:
A staff is quickly found to beat a dog.
King Henry VI.

"JOYCE, my love, your father would speak with you," said Mrs. Wharncliffe, softly opening the door of the bed-room shared by Joyce and little Evelyn, and closing it as softly behind her.

The household had retired as usual, and it had been deemed prudent to tell none of the servants, save the old nurse, that Colonel Wharncliffe intended that night to make his escape. A secret shared among many is always in danger of being betrayed, and faithful devotion to a master does not always inspire prudence, or entirely crush the love of gossip.

It was past ten o'clock, but Joyce, knowing that she should be summoned ere long, had made no preparations for the night. She stood at the open case-

ment, looking out into the twilight garden, her arms resting on the sill, and her face propped between both hands. Without, all was wonderfully still; not a breath of wind stirred the tall dark elms, no nightingale's song broke the silence, no wakeful bird stirred in its nest, no sound of human life fell upon the ear. A heavy dew had fallen, there was a delicious balmy freshness in the air which made breathing itself a delight, and from far distant fields was wafted the fragrance of the newly-cut hay. The calmness of nature no longer irritated Joyce as it had done on the previous morning, when she had run out to sink the book in the moat. Since then she had lived through so much that all her thoughts and perceptions were changed; she had passed from childhood to womanhood, had learnt what it was both to love and to hate. Since then, moreover, she had caught a glimpse of the peace which remains unbroken, in spite of earthly tumult and strife, and the peaceful summer night seemed to her a type of the Infinite and Eternal.

She had been crying, but she dried her tears hastily on hearing her mother's voice, and when she turned round a sudden smile of delight shone in her eyes, for she saw to her astonishment that the door had again been softly opened and her father himself stood there.

"I want a few words with you, little daughter," he said, quietly, stooping to kiss her forehead as he spoke. "We will come together to the south parlour; but first I will bid Evelyn farewell. No, do not rouse her, 'tis better she should sleep, poor little maid."

Joyce had to walk to the window once more that she might furtively wipe her eyes, while her father and

mother bent over the little sleeping child. When she looked round again, she saw her father kneel down for an instant beside Evelyn; he kissed her rosy cheek, her hair, her little uncovered arm, then he rose quietly, put his arm round his wife, and led the way through the dark and silent house, Joyce stealing after them with a full heart. Slowly and noiselessly they made their way down the broad oak staircase with its many turns, Joyce counting the familiar steps in each flight lest she should stumble and make a noise; then on through the ghostly-looking hall with its white flagstones and its dusky gallery, and its haunting recollections of the previous day. Joyce shuddered and crept closer to her mother, wondering if those terrible sounds would always torment her as she passed by. It was a relief to be in the light and warmth of the south parlour; it was a relief to be quite alone with her father, for Mrs. Wharncliffe left them, having many preparations to make.

For a minute Colonel Wharncliffe did not speak. He found that the words he intended to have spoken to Joyce would not come readily to his lips. How could he tell this child that she was much too young to know her own mind, when all the time she was raising to his, eyes which were full of a strange new depth and tenderness? How could he say that love was not for her yet awhile, when love had already added womanly dignity to the child-like face? Instead, his thoughts went back to the far past.

"Thou art just like thy mother, little maid," he said, stroking the soft, rounded cheek tenderly. "And so thy kinsman hath told thee of his love, is it not so?"

"Ay, father."

"And what did my daughter say when he told her?"

"I kissed him, father."

Colonel Wharncliffe smiled in spite of himself.

"And didst own thy love?"

"Ay, father, I did say I loved him; it was the truth," said Joyce, blushing vividly.

"Ay, my little maid," said the father, drawing her closer to him, "dost realise that love brings pain with it? An thou givest away thy heart thus early, thou canst never again play light-hearted and free like thy sisters."

"I do not want to be free, father, this is better," said Joyce, shyly, yet with a certain sweet decision in her tone.

"God help you, poor child; I see but a sad time before you!" said the colonel, with a deep sigh. "Say that I make my escape now and stay abroad till the danger is past and the country at rest again, that will avail naught to lessen Randolph's hatred. Nothing can free me from his enmity, nothing can save Hugo from his brother's wrath so long as he shields me by silence."

"But Hugo never thought it would be otherwise, father," said Joyce, with a little quiver in her voice. "He has never expected aught besides; nor have I."

"And thus my little maid hath half plighted herself to a life of sorrow and trouble."

"Nay, but to Hugo," she replied, with a thrill of eagerness in her voice which did not escape the father's notice. "Not to sorrow, but to him, and afterwards let come what will."

Very sadly he watched the sweet, eager face, with its light of love and devotion; he, with his fatherly desire to see her happy, free from care, and in perfect safety; he, with his manly longing to shield her from danger and suffering, could not understand that the long vista of pain and uncertainty did not in the least daunt her—seemed, on the contrary, rather to stimulate her love. For Joyce was a true woman, and the crown of a woman's love is the bearing of pain for and with the one she loves.

There was silence for a while. At length Colonel Wharncliffe spoke.

"Child," he said, "I cannot see before me; all is blank mist save this one step which I must take ere morn, to leave home and country. I can see no future for myself or for you, and do I try to think and scheme for you and the rest my fears distract me. My life is in peril, and, if I were dead, I know not what might become of you children. I believe that Hugo would strive to make you a good and worthy husband. But, Joyce, the times are evil; nay, child, thy pure heart cannot see the perils that I know of. I am saying naught against thy lover, but the times are evil, and he hath been over much at Whitehall."

"Yet would he never take me to the court. Long ago he said that. He said after the duel it were no fit place for me."

"Hugo may not be able to help it," said the colonel. "A King's commands are not lightly neglected. The world is an evil place, and my little white country-rose, for all her whiteness, might get sullied with the foul atmosphere of the court. Joyce,"—he took her

hands in his and held them fast—"Joyce, my child, if ever temptation should come to you, remember this, the love of your father and mother may shield you from much, and the love of your husband may shield you from more, but there is no invincible shield save the love of God Himself."

Tears rushed to her eyes, and she trembled from head to foot.

"Nay, sweet," he said, putting his arm round her, "I meant not to affright thee. Tremble not. That *is* invincible."

After that no word passed between them for some time, but in the silence Joyce learnt many things, little dreaming that the father whose strong arm encircled her was learning too, and perchance a harder lesson.

"Thou wilt take care of thy mother while I am away," he said, after a time. "She will need fresh help and comfort in many ways. Let that be thy charge, little Joyce. Do thou be her sunshine while I am gone."

"Evelyn would shine better," said Joyce, doubtfully.

"And thou wouldst then let the clouds gather in peace," said the colonel, smiling. "Nay, I would fain leave thee as thy mother's special helper; so will two birds be killed with one stone, as the proverb hath it, and my little daughter will not let herself pine away in a green and yellow melancholy."

Joyce smiled faintly.

"And you will send for us ere long," she said. "Why should not we be with you in Holland?" Then, remembering that Holland was further from Newgate than Mondisfield, would fain have unsaid her words.

The father read it all in her face, and felt a sharp stab of pain. How absolutely in that brief time she had given her heart away! It hurt him a little, even while he recognised that it was both natural and inevitable.

"I cannot tell how that may be," he said. "I cannot see any future; we must be content to leave it a blank."

Poor Joyce! the words struck to her heart with a deathly chill. No future! and such a heart-breaking present! The thought of Hugo faded a little in her mind, and she remembered only that her father was going forth alone to brave the perils of the way, that she might, perhaps, never see him again, and that but now she had grudged the thought of sharing his exile.

"Take me with you, father," she sobbed, clinging to him like a frightened child. "Go not alone thus—take me with you."

"Bless thee for the thought, sweet one, but it may not be," he said, caressing her. Then, as his wife returned to the room, "Dear heart, I shall leave you with Joyce as my deputy, Joyce is to be her mother's special child till my return. What! is all ready? Then let us be going. Delay doth but make things harder."

Outside in the passage a lamp stood on an old wooden chest, and beside it the saddle-bags and the valise which the colonel was to take with him. Betty, Damaris, Frances, and Robina were in waiting, cloaked and hooded, and Betty came and tied on Joyce's blue hood for her, and took the little sister's cold hand in hers as they followed their father and mother down the drive, across the moat, and into the stable-yard.

Robina ran on quickly that she might speak to and quiet the old watch-dog; then, assured that Nettle would not betray them, followed her sisters into the stable, where, with Frances to hold the lantern, the other three girls saddled their father's horse. Colonel Wharncliffe, standing in the doorway with his wife, watched the scene with a sore heart; the dusky stable with its high roof lost in shadow, the patient steed, the lantern held up high by one of the dark-robed girls, and shedding its yellow light on the others as they deftly arranged saddle and bridle. He fancied that the brightest gleam of all fell upon Joyce, revealing the sweet face with overbright eyes and tremulous lips; she was working away at straps and buckles with a nervous energy which strove to banish the thought of the parting—but the parting had to come.

Ere long the good steed was ready, and Robina led him carefully out into the yard beneath the tall elm-trees.

"With Merlin's help," said the colonel, stroking the glossy mane of his horse, "I ought to be at Harwich not long after sunrise, and at Harwich there will, I think, be small difficulty in getting a ship to Amsterdam. Farewell, dear heart. Keep up your courage, and be not troubled if you do not hear from me. Trust me to write by the first opportunity."

After that no one spoke. In dead silence he embraced them, mounted his horse, and rode out into the night. Those who were left behind stood quite still—no one stirred, no one cried; they just waited there listening with painful intentness to the sound of the horse's hoofs, gradually growing fainter and more faint.

At length they all knew that there was nothing more to wait for, the last sound had died away in the distance, and the summer wind stirring in the elm-trees seemed like a deep, sudden sigh as though Mondisfield knew that its master had gone forth into exile. Then one long, quivering, half-restrained sigh escaped the mother, and she was glad to feel a little, soft hand steal into hers. Were not her children left to her—doubly left? She must live for them!

"Come, my children!" she said, quietly. "Close the stable door, Damaris, and let us go back to bed. Nurse shall bring you all a sack-posset."

So they went back to the deserted house, and Colonel Wharncliffe rode on towards Harwich, well knowing that many perils beset his path.

CHAPTER V.

AT THE NATIONAL THANKSGIVING.

With whom an upright zeal to right prevails,
More than the nature of a brother's love.
King Henry VI.

THE summer had passed, and the house in Norfolk Street, which had been closed for long months owing to the absence of the family, once more began to show signs of life. Shutters were thrown back, windows opened, and in due time the old family coach rolled up to the door, to the delight of three dirty little boys who left off playing with the mud in the gutter to watch the arrival of the grandees. Rupert, resplendent in sad-coloured cloth faced with green velvet, old Lady

Merton, Sir William's sister, and lastly Mary, who had been by no means sorry to leave the country and return under Lady Merton's guardianship to London. Sir William and Lady Denham had gone to the Bath and were not to return till Sir William's gout had been cured.

Letters were rare in those days, and yet Mary had been filled with an uneasy wonder that the long summer months had brought no news of Hugo. The whole family had left London soon after Randolph and Hugo had gone to Longbridge Hall, and no one had heard from either of the brothers since. True, Lady Merton's lonely old manor house in Warwickshire was so remote that one never did expect any news there; but the vague rumours as to the Rye House Plot, and the curious silence on Hugo's part had troubled Mary not a little. More than once she pondered over that strange confession he had made to her in the preceding autumn, more than once she wondered how the case of conscience he had put to her could have anything to do with himself and Randolph.

Following her aunt up the broad stone steps and into the somewhat dingy passage beyond, she saw in an instant that upon the marble table outside the parlour door, lay a letter directed in Hugo's clear but rather cramped handwriting,

"To Rupert Denham, esquire,

"Att His House in Norfolk Street."

"Did Mr. Wharncliffe leave this to-day?" she asked, turning to old Thomas the butler, with whom she was a great favourite.

"Mr. Wharncliffe, mistress!" said the old man, raising

his eyebrows. "'Twas not Mr. Wharncliffe who brought it. 'Twas one day last July, and one of the sour-faced Puritan ministers brought it to the door. I took him to be a Muggletonian, for he had the ways of them."

"How?" asked Mary, forgetting her anxiety for a moment.

"Why, mistress, I did but keep him a few minutes on the step, and he had but knocked three times, and, when he taxed me with not minding my business better, I made bold to tell him he'd do well to mind his; whereupon he damned me to all eternity."

Mary laughed.

"Perchance it was Muggleton himself. What said you to him, Thomas?"

"Why, mistress, I said that would be as the Lord pleased, and reminded him, as the proverb hath it—'Cusses come home to roost.' I thought his letter might bide its time, knowing that Mr. Rupert would not care to pay for damnations on delivery, for I made sure it was from the minister himself."

Mary longed to hear the contents of the letter, but was obliged to show Lady Merton to the guest-chamber, and then to take off her travelling dress and put on her white evening gown, that she might not show any indiscreet desire for news of Hugo, awakening thereby her aunt's suspicion, and Rupert's love of teasing.

She thought she would tell Rupert of the Muggletonian's interview with the butler, and then, quite composedly and casually, ask how Hugo had come to employ so strange a messenger. But when she entered the parlour, and saw her cousin standing in the window still perusing the letter, something in his face changed

all her plans. For Rupert, the merry, careless, light-hearted cousin, who was never grave for two minutes together, was reading the letter with an expression of such deep concern on his face as she had never before seen.

"What is it, Rupert?" she asked, breathlessly. "What is the matter?"

He looked up, and she saw that there were tears in his eyes.

"'Tis from Hugo," he said, hoarsely. "He has got into trouble over this cursed plot—he is in Newgate."

"In Newgate!" she repeated, faintly. "Hugo in Newgate!"

"Ay, of all folk under the sun!" cried Rupert, passionately. "Or rather he was there months ago, may be yet alive perchance. Oh, why did that old fool forget to send me the letter!"

"He knew not it was from Hugo, 'twas brought hither by some Muggletonian who offended him. I suppose Thomas kept it back out of malice to the bearer."

Rupert damned poor Thomas even more vehemently and explicitly than the Muggletonian had done, while Mary caught eagerly at the first sheet of the letter, and read Hugo's account of what had passed at Mondisfield; then, half-blinded with tears, was obliged to let Rupert make out the rest, which he did not without difficulty, for Hugo had written in haste.

"Tidings have reached me this day," he read, "that Lord Russell is to be executed for the plot, Lord Howard of Escrick—said to be one of the cabal of six—having saved his own neck by swearing against his friend. And, Rupert, this is what they would fain have me do. There are but two ways out of this hell, and

God preserve me from taking either of them! I must betray Colonel Wharncliffe, or I must promise to bear witness against Colonel Sydney.

"Yesternight came to me one whom I take to be an attorney, and urged me much to come forward at Colonel Sydney's trial to prove his disaffection to the government, first seeking to entangle me by skilfully framed questions, and then dealing out both threats and promises of reward. Seeing that the rewards shall never be earned by me, I take it the threats will be put into execution, and that belike, I shall be once more thrust into yet straiter confinement. Therefore come to me as soon as may be, for at present I can see you, being in that part of Newgate they call the castle. I have written boldly come, and yet perchance you will not deem it fitting to visit one who is implicated in such an affair. However, though Sir William deems himself a Tory, I know right well that he lets not affairs of state interfere with his friendships, else had he not been friends with Colonel Sydney, to whom as you know he introduced me at the first, even while warning me of his views. They tell me though that the whole country is stirred by this so-called plot, and I know not how far the atmosphere of Norfolk Street may be changed, only I have great hope that friendship will be over strong for love of party, and that you will come. An you love me, bring me what news there is of Colonel Sydney. Mr. Betterton saw him on the morning of his arrest, and brought me word of it. Since that I have heard naught. Nor has Jeremiah made any answer to a letter which Mr. Betterton's man was to bear to him, from which it seems to me most like

that Randolph intercepted the said letter. From him I have no sign whatever, nor am like to have. Come to me soon, for I am heavy-hearted, and methinks you would make me smile even in gaol. My duty to Sir William and Lady Denham. Tell Mary her counsel served me well in the sharpest strait of all. She will understand. I am in a cell here with two Nonconformists. Griffith, the one I like the least, is at this moment discoursing with the notorious Lodowick Muggleton, who, however, I must not abuse since spite of all my errors he hath not as yet damned me, and will even out of charity bear this letter for me, and deliver it into your keeping. I have waited long in the hope of some such opportunity. The controversy seems drawing to an end, therefore must this letter do so also. For God's sake come to me, and if possible soon. "H. W."

"Written at Newgate,
"July 16, 1683."

"You will go to him at once?" asked Mary, feeling for the first time that her womanhood put her at a terrible disadvantage.

"Ay," he replied, "at once."

"Then take this with you;" she put her purse into his hand. "You will not get in without fees to the turnkeys, and perchance he may be in need of money himself."

Rupert did not refuse the purse, for to tell the truth his own was as usual inconveniently light. Mary's money found its way to his pocket among love-letters, betting memoranda, and the tortoise-shell comb with which he kept his periwig in order in society.

It was a great relief to her to see him start off at

once, and, having charged him with whatever messages she ventured to send, she stationed herself at the window to watch him out of sight, returning again and again to her post as soon as she deemed it possible for him to return.

The evening seemed interminable. The September twilight deepened into night, and Thomas brought in the lamp, and insisted on drawing the curtains; she could no longer keep her watch. Lady Merton, tired with her journey, sent down a message that she had gone to bed, and Mary sat idly in the great chair by the hearth, apparently watching old Thomas as he laid the table for supper, but in reality thinking of Rupert's visit to Newgate, and wearying for his return. Thomas, who was of a talkative turn thought he saw an opening for a little conversation.

"Sad doings in London, mistress, since you went away to Warwickshire. Sad doings we've had."

Mary looked up, returning from her reverie. It chafed her to feel how much more the old serving-man probably knew about the plot than she did, but she longed so much to know all that had happened that she swallowed her pride, and asked him a question.

"We heard but little in the country,—only vague rumours about the plot, and then that Lord Russell had been executed. Have you heard aught of Colonel Sydney, Thomas?"

"Ay, indeed, mistress. His man, Joseph, met me some four weeks or more agone, and I made bold to ask him after the colonel. You must know that on the second of August was a great fire in the Inner Temple, over against the great gate at Whitefriars.

Three staircases was burnt, and Sir Thomas Robinson, of the Common Pleas, he leaped out of window, and was picked up dead as any stone. Well, mistress, I went next day to see the spot, and there among the crowd I espied Colonel Sydney's French valet."

"And what said he of his master?"

"Why, he said he was very straitly confined in the Tower, and that they dealt most severely by him, so that his health had given way. They would let him see no friends, they had seized all his goods and chattels, nor would they permit him to have so much as a change of linen. However, Ducasse did tell me that his master meant to petition the King for at least so much as that."

Mary was silent for a minute. Her thoughts had flown back to an evening less than a year before, when in that very room Sydney had supped with them, and had discoursed of the better education of women, and how she had laughingly offered him some of the red-deer pie of her own making.

Once more the whole scene rose before her, the empty table was again surrounded by the cheerful party, the Republican colonel leant back in one of the chairs propounding his theories of life; Hugo sat opposite to him, listening with reverential attention; Rupert made comical signs of disagreement; Sir William and Lady Denham listened with mild amusement and well-bred patience to schemes which did not meet with their approval. Ah! how safe and happy they had all been then! And now one of the guests lay in the Tower and the other in Newgate, both of them in the gravest danger, both of them enduring untold hardships. She

could almost have smiled, had she not been so wrathfully indignant, at the thought of the proud Republican obliged to petition the King—and such a King—for permission to have a clean shirt.

Thomas, who had left the room during her silence, now returned, bearing a small box in his hand.

"Ah, mistress," he said, looking cautiously round to see that no one else was near, "you may have heard little in the country, but we, here in London, have perchance heard too much. I respects my master, and I respects Sir William's views and opinions, but though folk may say an old serving-man should think with his master, I don't hold with such sayings. Mark me, mistress, the nation won't stand such doings as there have been much longer. Lord Russell he said that those who attacked the liberties of England would have to wade through his blood. Well, God rest his soul! he is dead and gone, but his blood was not shed in vain."

He opened the box and took out a handkerchief, one corner of which bore a dark red stain. Mary looked at it and shuddered.

"Ay, mistress," continued the old serving-man, "I ever deemed myself a loyal subject, but now my eyes are opened, and I say that he who made such an one die, when all the world knew he was innocent, is a tyrant, and false to his country. I stood in Lincoln's Inn Fields, mistress, the day of Lord Russell's execution, and I saw him drive up with Dr. Burnet, brave and composed as could be, and, as I think, singing to himself in an undertone. I saw him butchered, mistress, and I will never forget it. I dipped this handkerchief in his blood, as a token to hand down to my children's

children; and, right or wrong, everyone of us is turned against His Majesty from that day."

"I feel with you," said Mary, in a low voice. "But, Thomas, be cautious in what you say, for after all this is my uncle's house, and we are bound to respect his feelings."

Truth to tell, Mary had long ago ceased to believe in the "divine right of kings," but she had never confessed it to anyone, well knowing that girls of twenty were not supposed to think at all upon such matters.

She asked for further details of Lord Russell's trial and death, of which Thomas gave her so harrowing a description that she could not restrain her tears. Scarcely had the old butler withdrawn from the room when steps sounded in the street without, and Rupert opened the front door. Mary hurried forward to meet him, an eager question on her lips.

"'Tis all of no use," said her cousin, wrathfully; "they will not let me see him."

"You have been to Newgate?" said Mary.

"Ay, and saw the governor. He admitted that Hugo was there, that he was ill, that he was in the darkest hole in Newgate, and that he had lain there since July, being far more obstinate than they had reckoned for. I tried to bribe him to let me see him, but 'twas of no avail.

"'Not if you offered me all the gold in the Indies,' he said. 'The court has an eye to this prisoner; he is no common case, to be dealt with as I list.'

"'The court will defeat its own ends by letting him pine to death in a dungeon,' said I.

"'Men don't pine to death so easily as you think

for,' said the governor laughing. 'And you may think yourself lucky for being spared a visit to a pestilent den, where likely enough the prisoner would refuse to speak to you, for he hath taken to silence of late. The more men would have him to talk, the more he persists in holding his tongue.'

"I asked what his illness was, whereupon the governor rang a bell and in came a gaoler, worse looking than himself, who, in presence of his master, gave naught but surly answers and rough jests."

"Could you not have seen him alone?" said Mary.

"Ay. Afterwards, having taken leave of the governor, I managed, by the aid of one of your golden guineas, to secure this fellow Scroop. He says the damp of the dungeon and the bad food have made him ill; he couldn't say how, not being a leech himself. I gave him a message for Hugo, but he would not promise to bear it him. Rough and coarse as he was, though, he is better than the governor, though he looks worse, and he might be bribed."

The cousins talked together far into the night, planning how to reach Hugo.

The next morning all London was ringing with the sound of church-bells, for it was the 9th of September, the day appointed for the National Thanksgiving for the King's escape from the Rye-House plot. Some commotion was caused in one of the churches, for a note was handed in to the unsuspecting reader and delivered by him before he had fairly gathered the drift of the verse.* The astonished congregation, who had

* This actually happened. See Luttrell's *Journal.*

come to return thanks for His Majesty's deliverance, listened in amazement to the following lines:—

"You hypocrites, forbear your pranks,
To murder men and then give thanks:
Forbear your tricks, pursue no further,
For God accepts no thanks for murder."

In the meantime old Thomas quietly made his way home again, and Mary Denham was not sorry to avail herself of the large green fan which ladies were in the habit of taking with them to church to screen their devotions.

One other person in the church also changed colour from very different reasons. Randolph's face grew a shade paler, his bitter mouth twitched nervously once or twice. Murder was an ugly word, and there was such a thing as aiding and abetting murder. Then again there was Hugo. They had brought him word that he was ill, and he had rejoiced, thinking that there was the greater chance of gaining his point and dragging from his lips the desired information. But if Hugo were to die?

He shuddered at that thought. And the thought haunted him persistently all through the service. He had vowed that he would not see his brother before his trial, but while the old clergyman delivered his lengthy discourse Randolph was struggling with an almost unconquerable longing that had suddenly seized him. A strong desire to see Hugo once more took possession of him. How was he to justify such a change of purpose to himself? How was he to permit such a weakness? In truth the better part of his nature was striving to make itself felt, and to escape from the

thraldom of the lower. To do Randolph justice, he had been sufficiently miserable during these summer months, and this misery reached its climax. Something, he knew not what, had touched into life the faint love which yet lingered in his heart for Hugo. If he could but justify this desire to see him with his plans and schemes! And, after all, it would defeat these said schemes were Hugo to die in gaol, and was he prudent to trust entirely to the word of an ignorant gaoler? Hugo was too valuable to be left in such a way. It would be in every way prudent to visit him. Having thus reconciled himself and made his excuses to his lower nature, he lost no time in making his way to Newgate, where no difficulty was made about admitting him. He asked a question or two of Scroop as the gaoler led him along the dreary passages.

"Was the prisoner better? What had his illness been?" and so forth.

"You'll judge for yourself, sir," said Scroop, grimly. "I never set up for being a leech."

"But is he yet ill?" asked the elder brother, with more anxiety in his voice than he cared to betray.

"Oh, ay, he's ill yet awhile, if sobeit he's alive," said Scroop, carelessly. "Have a care how you walk, sir, these steps is slippery with the damp."

"What! is it down here!" exclaimed Randolph, shuddering. "'Tis enough to kill him, in good sooth. Why did you put him in such a vile hole?"

"I did but obey the governor's orders, sir, and belike you know from whom he received them." Scroop looked sharply back at his companion as he gave utterance to these words. He was pleased to see Randolph

wince. "Belike you'll not care to remain long, sir; I will but lock you in with the prisoner for a half hour. This way, sir, and mind your head."

So saying, he fitted one of his keys into a low door, unlocked it, drew back the bolts, and bade the visitor walk in.

CHAPTER VI.

RANDOLPH'S REMORSE.

Yea, bless'd is he in life and death
That fears not death, nor loves this life;
That sets his will, his wit beneath,
And hath continual peace in strife.
That doth in spite of all debate
Possess his soul in patiènce;
And pray, in love, for all that hate;
And hate but what doth give offence.

JOHN DAVIES (1612).

RANDOLPH made a step or two forward, cautiously groping his way, for at first he could scarcely discern anything in the dim light. He would fain have kept the gaoler with him, for it gave him an unpleasant feeling to be locked into this dismal dungeon, where all was silent as the grave. Supposing Hugo were actually dead? What if his worst fears were realised?

It was strange that he made no sign, for his eyes must have grown accustomed to the twilight. The floor was rough and uneven, in many places covered with water nearly an inch deep. Randolph splashed straight into it, and swore half-a-dozen oaths as the chill and muddy stream found its way into his shoes.

But soon things grew clear to him, and once more he could see distinctly all that there was to see in the bare prison cell. Hugo, wrapped in a dark green cloak, lay on the stony bed in the corner; his white face and hands gleaming out of the dimness, looked so deathly that Randolph with an exclamation of dismay hurried across the muddy floor, and bent down close to him. At that moment his eyes opened, gazed in astonishment for an instant at the face bent over him, then lit up with a gleam of momentary rapture.

"Is it you?" he cried. "Ah, I have had such hateful dreams."

"I came here to see how you fared," said Randolph, more gently than he was in the habit of speaking.

"Here?" repeated Hugo, his face clouding over. "Where is it? Where are we?" He half-raised himself with a bewildered, troubled look and glanced around. It was after all the dream that had been fair and the reality that was hateful. There was the grim, iron-studded door, and the little grating, and the bare walls, and the wet floor gleaming in the sickly light. He sank back again, and covered his face with his hands. There was silence in the cell. Randolph was relieved when he looked up once more.

"I must have slept right sound," he said, in a voice which betrayed repressed suffering. "I did not hear you come in."

"You have little else to do in Newgate, I should think."

"No; and here it is not often possible to sleep at night because of the rats; they are quieter by day."

He got up as he spoke, and crossed the cell languidly,

returning with a rough wooden seat which he offered to his brother.

Then he sat down on the bed with his back against the wall, and his head resting on his hand.

"Your head is aching?" asked Randolph.

"Yes," he said, quietly, "it always aches now."

"They should have told me how ill you were."

"Scroop said he did tell you. Scroop is very good to me."

"What does he do for you?"

Randolph glanced round as though to discover traces of the gaoler's attention.

"He brings the bread and water himself instead of sending one of the prisoners; and he is never uncivil now. And on the bad days he will bring me a double share of water."

"There is no other prisoner with you, then?"

"No, save for the first day and night, when poor Baillie was here. Baillie of Jerviswood, a Scotchman, near of kin to Dr. Burnet."

"I have heard of him," said Randolph. "He, too, was implicated in the plot. What has come to him? Is he executed?"

"No," said Hugo. "Worse than that. They bore him back to Scotland because here they may not legally torture him for evidence. There he may have both rack and boot."

"And since he went you have been alone?"

"Yes, save when Scroop comes in, or Mr. Ambrose Philips."

"Who is he?"

"One who hath an order from one of the secretaries

to come here as oft as he will and try to drag evidence from me."

"Ah, lad," said Randolph, with a sigh, "when are you going to yield to him? What heart have I for joining in a National Thanksgiving while you languish here!"

Hugo turned his languid eyes upon him for a minute, but he seemed too weak and depressed to care very much for anything.

"Is there a thanksgiving?" he asked. "I heard St. Sepulchre's bells ring. They tolled for Lord Russell the day I came in here, and now they ring for the King's triumph. What day is it? I have lost count of time."

"'Tis the ninth of September."

"Then I have but been in this cell nigh upon two months. Yet it seems like two years." Then, half dreamily, "How merry the bells sound. I thought it must be Gunpowder-plot Day. Only September! Only September! My God! keep me from thinking of the whole!"

"The whole of what?" asked Randolph, startled by the sudden tone of agony.

Hugo seemed to return to the world again.

"Of life," he said. "It is thinking of the whole that drives men wild."

Randolph knew not what to say. The interview had not been at all what he had expected. Hugo did not seem overpowered with delight at seeing him, nor much struck by his condescension in coming; he was so ill and weak, too, that the elder brother's manhood kept him from saying what was harsh and bitter, and

tender words did not come naturally to his lips. So once more he fell back into an uncomfortable silence.

All at once voices were heard outside, and the key grated in the lock. An extraordinary change came over Hugo. His pale face flushed as though he had made some sudden effort; he sprang up, crossed the cell hurriedly, and took up a position with his back to the light, leaning against the wall below the grating. Meanwhile Scroop had opened the door, and there entered a bland-looking man, who glanced swiftly at Randolph.

"Ah, the gaoler told me I should find you here. I have merely come to have my little conversation with your brother. I will not interrupt you long."

Randolph perceived that this must be Mr. Philips. The little man turned to Hugo, who merely bowed to him, and then once more leant back against the wall with folded arms.

"Well, Mr. Wharncliffe, I hope I see you better. What do you think of our National Thanksgiving, eh? What, still playing the mute? I hoped you had tired of that game. But in truth I have some news for you this morning. I have been to the Tower, and have seen your friend Sydney."

Hugo's face relaxed a little, and a very eager look dawned in his eyes.

"How is he?" he asked anxiously.

"Nay," said Philips, "why should I tell you what you would fain know, when you will not tell me aught that I desire? Promise to give evidence against the colonel, and I'll not only tell you about him, but I'll bear you to him this very day."

Hugo vouchsafed no answer to this. Philips continued, more warmly,

"You *know* that your fate is in your own hands. 'Tis in your own power to make yourself what you will, for you know this rogue Sydney is a traitor, and you may make yourself what you will, if you will discover what you know of his designs against the government."

"You are mistaken," said Hugo, sternly. "I could say naught that could touch a hair of Colonel Sydney's head. I have told you so a hundred times."

"If I might advise the King," said Philips, wrathfully, "I would bid him have all you damned Whig rogues hanged. The colonel sent a message to you, moreover," he continued, tantalizingly; "but it is impossible for me to deliver it while you still keep up this stubborn resistance."

And thus in much the same strain the interview went on, Philips alternately coaxing and threatening, Hugo loftily silent, his face stern, his lips firmly set, his eyes, which just before had been so languid, full of strength and resistance.*

At length the questioner's patience was exhausted, and he took his leave.

"You may think to baffle me, Mr. Wharncliffe," he said, angrily, "and for a time you may succeed, but in the end you will be forced to succumb. Mark my words,

* Ambrose Philips was really employed to extort evidence against Sydney from one Aaron Smith, who was kept for some time a prisoner. See Ewald's *Life of Sydney*. Meadley says that prisons were ransacked, and menaces and persuasions alternately employed among the prisoners, in order to get a second witness to prove Sydney's treason, but none could be found.

there are worse things in our power than you wot of. I have known folk not allowed to sleep by day or by night for weeks that evidence might be gained. I shall see you again on the morrow."

Hugo bowed, but made no reply, and Philips, rapping loudly on the door, was released by Scroop, who had remained outside. When the door had been closed and locked, Hugo, with an air of great exhaustion, recrossed the cell, and once more lay down on the bed.

"That is over," he muttered to himself, in a tone of relief.

"You dread Mr. Philips, then?" said Randolph.

Hugo started.

"I had forgot you were there," he said. "No, I do not dread the man, but I dread myself. Oh! must you go?" as Randolph rose and began to readjust his cloak. "Will you not stay yet a little while? There is so much I would ask you,—and who knows if we shall meet again!"

There was such entreaty in his voice that Randolph sat down once more.

"We shall meet again at your trial," he said, coldly. "Have you not remembered that I shall have to bear witness against you?"

"Yes," said Hugo. "But perchance that may never come off. There is a deliverer on whom Ambrose Philips does not reckon. Every second day the fever returns to me, and with that a chance of death. But I waste the time. Tell me of Jeremiah—of the Denhams."

Randolph had not the heart to refuse his request.

"You don't know what it is to have you to talk to," he said, gratefully; "the days are like eternity."

"They do not permit books?"

"No; I have naught to pass the time save an old bit of charcoal, with which I can draw, and a rat which I have tamed. Were it not for those, I should have gone mad."

"By your own confession, you see, you are altogether miserable. Why, then, be such a fool as to stay?"

"No," said Hugo, quietly, "I am not wholly miserable. Can you not understand that 'tis sweet to feel you hold the safety of two men in your keeping? Did I betray them, then indeed I should be, and deserve to be, right miserable. What! one o'clock by St. Sepulchre's?"

"Ay; is that your dinner-hour?" asked Randolph.

Hugo smiled faintly.

"One does not dine in Newgate," he said. "But this is the hour when my fever returns. Perchance it were, after all, best that you should go."

Randolph half hesitated. Truth to tell, he wanted his own dinner, and yet a vague uneasiness prompted him to stay with his brother. He looked down at him intently, and that look made him decide to stay. For, true to Hugo's prediction, the paroxysm of ague had already begun. He had turned ghastly pale, his lips were blue, his face haggard and drawn. Randolph thought him dying.

"There is naught to fear," he said, speaking as well as he could with chattering teeth. "It is ever like this."

But Randolph did fear. For soon Hugo was shivering from head to foot, and a strange blue shade had overspread his face.

"Do they not even allow straw in this wretched hole?" said Randolph, wrathfully.

"No," he replied; "for fear of fire."

To speak of fear of fire in that miserable, damp dungeon seemed a mockery. With an oath, Randolph tore off both his cloak and doublet and wrapped them round the shivering form.

"Is that better?" he asked.

But there was no reply. Hugo seemed to be drifting away into unconsciousness. Was it the unconsciousness of death?

"He shall not die!" said Randolph to himself. "He shall not!" And, with a pang, Hugo's own words returned to him—"'Tis sweet to feel you hold the safety of others in your keeping."

Sweet! It was hideous beyond description—it was intolerable! But his brother should not die; death should not deliver him. His life was too precious to be lost. Not that Randolph would permit himself weakly to be turned from his purpose by the sight of a little pain. Hugo should remain in Newgate till he had been forced into giving evidence, but he should not stay another day even in that pestilent dungeon. He rapped loudly at the door to attract Scroop's attention; but the goaler was out of hearing, and, to tell the truth, had forgotten him. He knocked, he swore, he stormed, all to no purpose.

"Must you go?" said Hugo, reviving a little.

"No, but I want to send that varlet to fetch blankets for you. A plague on his foolish pate. Why doth he not hear?"

"Never mind; a dozen blankets would not warm me. Moreover, I am well used to it."

Randolph stood watching him in miserable helplessness. At length, prompted by common-sense, he sat down on the stony pillow and lifted Hugo so that his head and shoulders rested against him instead of upon the stones.

"Ah! that is better," he said, and spite of the pain and misery, a look of relief—almost of happiness—stole over his worn face.

They did not speak much, but for hours Randolph held him in his strong arms and did what he could for him, Hugo responding with the sort of dog-like gratitude with which he had always accepted kindness from his guardian. At length, when the shivering fits had given place to raging fever and thirst, when the third and final stage of the attack was over and had left the patient worn out and drowsy, Randolph once more resumed his doublet and hat, and this time succeeded in attracting Scroop's notice.

"Had as much as you like of dungeon life, sir?" asked the goaler.

"Ay, and the prisoner hath had too much," said Randolph. Then bending down over his brother, "It shall be your last night in this hole, trust me."

Hastily embracing him he turned away, and was conducted by Scroop to the upper regions.

"Ah, my Ratto," said Hugo, as his little brown friend appeared the moment the cell was quiet once more, "you and your family may dance all night an you will, I'll not grumble; for to-morrow, Ratto, I shall

breathe freely once more, to-morrow I shall have better company than you."

But when the next evening he thought things over, he came to the conclusion that he had wronged Ratto.

CHAPTER VII.

CLEVELAND HOUSE.

Oh, most delicate fiend!
Who is't can read a woman?
Cymbeline.

After the first moment of intense relief on breathing the fresh air in Newgate Street, Randolph fell into a train of very unpleasant thought. The struggle first awakened in his mind by that curious rhyme in the church returned now with tenfold force. He could not get his will, at any rate at present; but neither could he make up his mind to resign his will and accept defeat at the hands of his younger brother. Without accepting defeat, he could not save Hugo from the hard fate that awaited him. In this strait what was he to do? Not for long years had so sharp a struggle raged within him, not for long years had the good so nearly triumphed.

He had walked gloomily along Fleet Street, chafed and annoyed by the loyal crowd who were preparing the evening illuminations. Somehow this thanksgiving grated on him, seemed to his guilty conscience but a hideous mockery. Again and again he heard Hugo's voice dreamily repeating, "How merry the bells sound,"

and he shuddered as he remembered the dreary prison cell.

By this time he had reached the entrance to the Temple, and for a moment he stood irresolute, vaguely listening to the bells of St. Clement's, vaguely watching the men and boys as they heaped faggots upon a bonfire hard by. Should he go home to encounter Jeremiah's stern face and unspoken reproaches, or should he divert his thoughts from the unpleasant subject altogether and go to Cleveland House? He looked past the bonfire in the direction of the Strand, he looked to the left towards the dark and quiet Temple. Which was it to be? His whole future life hung upon the choice, little as he was aware of the fact. An insignificant turning-point, a decision which seemed scarce worth pausing over, but, as is so often the case, one upon which hung great issues.

The chambers in King's Bench Walk rose vividly before him—the empty chair, the untouched books, the silence, the sad-faced serving-man. Why, it would all reproach him, all re-echo the inward voice of his self-reproach. He could not bear it. He must seek diversion, dancing, drink, flattery, vice, anything, he cared not what, so that it would take him out of his true self. He turned into the "Grecian," made a hasty meal, then threading his way through the crowded streets, sought refuge from his tormenting thoughts in the costly and magnificent house—a palace in all but the name—which had been built for the Duchess of Cleveland. This evening it was quieter than usual, for there were festivities at Whitehall, and the duchess would have been there herself had she not been detained by a

slight indisposition. Randolph was ushered through stately corridors and gorgeous but tenantless rooms to a little boudoir which he knew right well. It was a charming little room; the most beautiful tapestry hung upon the walls, the softest skin rugs covered the floor, a cheerful wood fire threw its mellow light upon one of Grindling Gibbon's most delicately carved chimney-pieces, and wax candles disposed here and there beneath rose-coloured shades diffused a soft glow on all around. At one end of the room an open doorway, half veiled by silken draperies of gold and crimson, betrayed a vision of white-robed attendants with lutes, harps, and guitars, and as Randolph entered a girl's voice was filling the room with the exquisite air and the abominable words of one of the songs of the day. Beside the wood fire in the boudoir sat the Duchess of Cleveland, her shapely head with its rich brown curls resting in languid comfort among crimson velvet cushions, her tiny feet stretched out to the blaze upon a French tabouret, her long, loose dress of creamy Indian silk falling in rich folds on the tiger-skin rug, and her swan-like neck partly veiled by a soft, white fur tippet which she had drawn around her.

"Ah, is it you, Randolph?" she said, smiling and motioning him to a seat beside her. "You have come to cheer me in my desolation. I took cold upon the river last night, and so dare not share in the Whitehall festival."

So carefully and delicately did her attendants dispose the rouge and powder, that it was almost impossible to believe the duchess to be a middle-aged woman. She had all the charms of youth and all the *savoir faire*

and acute observation of a woman of great experience. Her pencilled eyebrows, her large, lustrous dark eyes, her finely chiselled nose with its arched nostrils, and her full, red lips, bore an expression of calm, haughty consciousness of power. Looking far younger than Randolph, she was in truth some years his senior, and, while seeming only to charm and amuse him, she ruled over him despotically. In his inmost heart he was aware that he was her slave, but this was a slavery which he did not deem bondage. It was the fashion. What then! he must follow with the multitude, and there was no shame connected with such conquest. But to be conquered by principles, to own the sovereignty of conscience, to sacrifice present gain to some shadowy notion of right, this was a "bondage" which he could not endure, which, in fact, he had not the courage to face. He had come to Cleveland House to be soothed out of the rugged vision of hateful duty, of humiliating reparation which had dawned upon him. He had come because his love of Hugo had made him miserable, and because his love of self made him hate the misery, and because in good truth, vice was so easy and natural, and the first steps in virtue so perplexing and hard.

"I cannot so much as smell a flower," said the duchess, laughing and taking from her bosom a cluster of red roses. "There, you happy mortal, exempt from colds and coughs! bear them for me. Oh, crimini! how he crushes my poor gift in his manly grasp! Thou art out of temper to-night, *mon ami.*"

"And therefore I came to you," he said, looking at her bright, laughing eyes.

"That is ever the fate of women," said the duchess,

pouting and re-arranging her dress. She had taper fingers, but her wrists were large and ugly. "When the men are worth talking to they stay away. When they are in the dumps they come and expect to be amused, for all the world like peevish, nursery imps. I dare swear it is that brother of yours who troubles your peace. Ah! I thought as much."

"I have seen him this day. He is ill, well-nigh dying."

"That must not be allowed," said the duchess, decidedly. "What, have they been starving him?"

"They have done their worst to him, and he will reveal naught. Misery seems to have no power to shake him from his purpose."

"He was ever obstinate as a mule, our little Court saint," said the duchess. "But since misery will not move him, try yet another plan. Let him have the best private cell which Newgate will afford, and I will send a sweet little temptress to nurse him into health and to play the part of a Delilah."

Randolph did not speak, there was a curious look of doubt and hesitation in his face.

"What! art turning Puritan?" said the duchess, with a mocking laugh.

"A very idle question, fair lady," he replied, with a slightly sarcastic smile, "while I sit here in this palace of delight. However, you know well that in some sense Hugo may be accounted one."

"That was all very well when he was a pretty, pale-faced boy. But now he is a man, and ought to pay his *devoirs* to beauty and love. He must be brought down from his lofty heights, very kindly and tenderly

an you will, but he must be brought down, else will you never gain from him what you would. Why should you object? 'Twill be a kindness to send him what will best cheer his solitude. And as to my little Blanchette, she will be the queen of his heart ere another day is over. No man can resist Blanchette. I will call her."

The duchess touched a little silver bell which stood beside her, and immediately one of the white-robed attendants appeared at the doorway, with one hand holding back the silken curtain which hung in soft sheeny folds on each side of her. She was a beautiful creature, tall, graceful, with snowy neck and arms, masses of loose flaxen hair, and eyes which were constantly veiling themselves beneath dark lashes as though modestly conscious of their own power.

"What was the name of your song, Blanchette?" asked the duchess.

"It was a love song, by my Lord Rochester," said the girl, in a high, clear voice, in which there were pleasant modulations.

"It suits you well, go sing another like it. After that you may close the door."

The girl curtseyed and withdrew, and ere long another passionate song thrilled through both ante-room and boudoir. Then the door was softly closed, and there was silence.

"Well, shall we try her?" said the duchess.

"Perchance it might be as well," said Randolph.

"Still doubtful," said the duchess, laughing. Why, *mon ami,* St. Antony himself couldn't have resisted her. I see a triumphant end to all your trouble."

Randolph did not speak. His eye had fallen upon a mirror, which hung upon the opposite wall. In it he could see the reflection of the luxurious room, of the magical lights, of the beautiful duchess with her pearl earrings and necklace, of himself lying on the tiger-skin rug at her feet.

Another picture rose before him. A dank prison wall, a gleam of chill light from a narrow grating, a man standing beneath it with folded arms, set lips, stern brow, bearing threats and taunts in silence, rejecting bribes with scorn.

And the duchess spoke lightly and cheerfully of a "triumphant end."

"Well, it would be worth while to triumph over that other!—that other whose picture contrasted so unpleasantly with the reflection in the mirror. He would like to triumph over him, he would like to falsify that picture, he would like to drag him down, he hated him for his resistance. He should not die, he should not triumph, he should be dragged down, and be a little lower than himself.

"You have cheered me," he said, turning to the duchess with a smile in his dark eyes, in which there lurked already the anticipation of victory. "An you will indeed spare her, Blanchette shall try her skill."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE TRIAL.

This man is great with little state,
Lord of the world epitomised:
Who with staid front out-faceth fate:
And, being empty, is sufficed—
Or is sufficed with little, since (at least),
He makes his conscience a perpetual feast.

JOHN DAVIES. (1612).

SCROOP had never been deficient in that which should be a marked characteristic in a gaoler,—he had never lacked a habit of observation. At the same time, he had never observed any prisoner with such acuteness as he observed Hugo Wharncliffe. He had watched men in the mass, he had watched them as cases, but he had never before watched them with deep interest as individuals. On the night of Hugo's arrival in June, Scroop had for the first time in his life wondered. Through those dreary August days, watching his prisoner in the dungeon as he fought against fever, depression, and misery, Scroop wondered still, and grew pitiful. Through the six weeks of fierce, unmitigated temptation that followed the elder brother's visit, Scroop wondered more and more, and grew reverential. At length there came a day when Blanchette failed to appear at Newgate, and thereupon the gaoler was summoned into the governor's private room.

"Mr. Wharncliffe hath recovered from his illness?"

"Ay, sir. He seems well enough."

"Good. Then remove him this day to the Common Debtor's Ward. 'Tis well he should try a change of air."

Scroop dutifully grinned in recognition of his superior's jest, and at once proceeded to obey his orders.

The room to which Hugo had been removed was dry, well-aired, and by no means uncomfortable; he probably owed his life to the change. As Scroop opened the door, the prisoner looked up apprehensively; when he perceived that the gaoler was alone, he could not repress a look of relief.

The six weeks' temptation had left very visible marks upon his face. It was no longer possible to forget that he was a man—the words "boy" and "lad" which had hitherto most naturally come to the lips in speaking of him, were no longer appropriate. The dreamy look in his eyes had given place to a quiet vigilance. The sweet-tempered mouth had become sterner and straighter—youth had passed for ever.

"I am to be removed, Scroop? That is well," he said, with a sigh of relief.

"Your honour does not ask whither," said the gaoler.

"I care not," said Hugo. "So it be from here, and from——" He broke off and relapsed into silence.

Scroop felt sorry for his charge. And yet, since he had held his own through such numberless temptations, why should he not hold his own still, even in the degraded atmosphere of the common gaol?

Truth to tell, the change was at first welcome to

Hugo. It was a relief to see fresh faces, even though they were reckless and often wicked faces; it was a relief to hear once more the babel of many voices, and it needed all his new strength to resist the craving which came over him to join the majority in drowning wretchedness in drink, and whiling away the weary days by reckless play. He had been in this new ward about a fortnight, when one day he was ordered into the governor's presence.

"You had best be preparing your defence, Mr. Wharncliffe," said the Governor. "For a Habeas Corpus hath been brought unto me, and I am ordered to bring you before the Court of King's Bench on the morrow."

"To-morrow!" exclaimed Hugo, hardly knowing whether he were relieved at the news or not. "Am I not to be allowed counsel?"

"No, sir," replied the governor.

"I suppose I can have a copy of the indictment?" said Hugo, frowning slightly, for he was greatly perplexed to know what possible defence he could make.

"Oh! yes, you can have that," said the governor, coolly. "And much may it help you."

Hugo read it in silence. Then he looked up boldly; not that he felt any confidence whatever, but that he would not let the governor see his hopelessness.

"I desire to subpœna two witnesses," he said. "Sir William Denham of Norfolk Street, also Mr. Rupert Denham."

"It shall be done," said the governor. "They have both of them been here full oft desiring to see you. 'Twill at any rate look well to have such a Tory name as Denham witnessing in your behalf."

Hugo made no answer. He knew that the only witnesses who could avail him aught were at Mondisfield Hall, knew that there could be but one end to the trial.

He slept little that night, looking forward with a curious mixture of pain and pleasure to the coming day. It would be bitter beyond all thought to see Randolph arraigned against him, yet it would be inexpressibly delightful to breathe fresh air once more, to see the world again, to see and perhaps speak with his old friends.

Early in the morning he was taken in a hackney coach to Westminster; the change of scene was less enjoyable than he had expected, he felt dazed, confused, and terribly unequal to the work which lay before him. Moreover, the sun was not shining, as he had hoped. It was a gloomy November morning, and he could only catch a glimpse of the Abbey, looming drearily out of the river fog.

He tried to fancy himself once more a Westminster boy, tried to think this was all some hideous dream;—and indeed it scarcely felt real to him when the coach drew up at the entrance to Westminster Hall, and he was marshalled through the staring crowd, to find himself, not in his wonted place taking notes of the case among a group of careless Templars, but as a prisoner at the bar. He glanced hastily around, noting many familiar faces, the sight of which disturbed him so much that he was glad to sit down and busy himself with some papers which he had brought, with a few notes as to his defence. He felt that Randolph was present, but could not bear to look at him; he knew that the

Lord Chief Justice was darkly regarding him, but, having once bowed to him, he would not cast one glance in his direction, for he feared Jeffreys, and was afraid of showing his fear, and ashamed of the weakness which yet he had never been able to overcome. There was not much time for thought; all was proceeded with very rapidly, the names of the jury hurried through, the indictment read, and the case opened by the counsel for the prosecution. Hugo tried hard to listen, tried hard to think, but the speech reached him in very disjointed fashion. He was vaguely conscious that Mr. Ingram, in a clear, ringing, attractive voice, was saying that he would prove the prisoner to be a member of the Green Ribbon Club, a personal friend of Algernon Sydney, one who protected conventiclers, a betrayer of trust, a hater of monarchy, and a concealer of treason of the deepest dye.

The speech was an effective one. At the close the witnesses for the Crown were called, and the first name which rang through the court was that of Randolph Wharncliffe. The prisoner seemed to come to himself as the familiar name fell upon his ear. He drew himself together, sat more erect, looked up calmly for the first time, unmindful of the myriad eyes fixed upon him,—mindful only of the face which he had not seen for so many weeks. He watched his brother keenly as the oath was administered to him. Did he think of that scene in the gallery at Mondisfield, when another oath had been administered on the nun's cross? If so, the thought left no trace on his stern brow; he looked hard, austere, as though he hated the work before him, but meant to go through it unscrupulously. Then, skil-

fully aided by questions from Mr. Ingram, Randolph unfolded the whole story of Hugo's two visits to Mondisfield, omitting only, or adroitly veiling, all that could make his own share in the work appear dishonourable—omitting, of course, the scene with the pistol.

Indignation at this incomplete version began to stir in Hugo's heart, and a pang of wrathful pleasure possessed him when he remembered that it was in his power to cross-examine the witness. He would punish him—would drag from his lips the disgraceful confession of that midnight scene—would show forth before all men the villainy that had led him astray. Revenge at least was in his power, and revenge he would have. His eyes flashed so strangely that the spectators wondered what had come to the prisoner, who at first had been so passive and downcast.

And yet?—and yet? Was it for him to think of vengeance? Was he—the greatly forgiven—to harbour wrathful feelings? Was he to treat his brother as though there were no tie between them—no deathless bond of kinship? Well, Randolph had broken the bonds,—had treated him shamefully. Why should he not follow his example? Why should he not have his turn now!

"If you have any questions to put to the witness," bawled Jeffreys, "put them at once."

Hugo stood up. Burning words were on his lips, —words which would have shamed Randolph before the whole court,—questions to which he could but have given one reply. Nothing could have altered the inevitable result of the trial, but this would have brought to light Randolph's villainy, and proved the

strongest excuse for himself; but at that moment another trial scene flashed before his mind—the vision of another prisoner—and with that a loathing of his selfish anger and petty revenge, and withal a recollection of what love and brotherhood meant.

"Of my brother I ask no question," he said, quietly; and resumed his seat amid murmurs of surprise.

Only Randolph fully understood all that was involved in the prisoner's silence. A sudden flush overspread his dark face; he left the witness-box hastily, and passed through the crowd with a face so troubled and downcast that many of the observant people remarked that it must be hard on an elder brother to bear such family disgrace; they felt sorry for Mr. Wharncliffe.

John Pettit, landlord of the "White Horse," Mondisfield, next deposed to the prisoner's presence at his inn on the fifth of October of the previous year, and corroborated Randolph's assertion that Hugo had accompanied his brother in the evening. Hugo put two or three questions to him, but chiefly for the pleasure of speaking to one who knew Joyce.

Sir Peregrine Blake and other witnesses followed, and there was much discussion upon the papers found in Colonel Wharncliffe's room. Then Hugo was told to enter upon his defence. Sir William and Rupert listened now anxiously, and were in truth astonished at the prisoner's intrepid bearing. It was the first time he had ever spoken in public, and to speak amid the perpetual interruptions of Jeffreys was no easy matter. However, he went steadily on, knowing that the defence

was useless, yet with simple directness putting forward the sole plea which was left to him. He was charged with misprision of treason, but it had yet to be proved that treasonable matter was contained in the particular book of manuscripts which he had concealed, it had yet to be proved that treasonable words had been spoken at the meeting at Mondisfield. They had but the witness of one man to these facts; he submitted that the treason was only inferred, and not proven.

Then he called upon Sir William Denham to bear witness to his character, and Sir William, having described him as the last man on earth to meddle with plots or politics, and one of the King's most loyal subjects, made way for his son, who confirmed his testimony. It was a lame defence, and a poor show of witnesses, yet better than nothing.

"What; no more witnesses?" shouted Jeffreys, in mocking tones.

"No, my lord," said Hugo, composedly.

"Then address yourself to the jury, and don't waste time," said the Lord Chief Justice. Nothing irritated him so much as quiet composure. "I can tell you we've weightier matters in hand this day than listening to the vain prattle of such lads as you. Speak on, and keep to the point."

"Gentlemen," said Hugo, his mellow voice contrasting oddly with Jeffreys' hoarse roar, "perchance you will not deem five minutes over long for one who is pleading against lifelong imprisonment. I have been denied the aid of counsel, denied any legal aid whatever, and am therefore at great disadvantage. However, I trust you will hold with the poet—

"For lawyers and their pleading,
They esteem is not a straw;
They think that honest meaning
Is of itself a law."

It hath been shown to you that I have ever been His Majesty's loyal subject; I heard no word of the plot till the whole was made public, nor have you any right to construe a refusal to give evidence against a kinsman into a mute acknowledgment that the said kinsman is guilty of treason. You may infer what you please—I cannot help that—but I maintain, gentlemen—and I think you will agree with me—that the treason is not proven, and that you cannot legally find me guilty of misprision, seeing that the whole hangeth upon the word of but one witness. My life is in your hands. I ask you, apart from fear or favour, to give me the verdict of honest citizens, and to say that this case is not proven."

Had the jury gone away with those unmistakeably honest tones ringing in their ears, there might have been some faint hope for Hugo, but there followed Mr. Ingram's powerful speech on behalf of the Crown, and then Jeffreys' summing-up and charge to the jury. Accustomed as he was to the brutality of the Lord Chief Justice, Hugo was yet amazed at the audacious wickedness of the man, his utter disregard of all reason and right. The jury retired, but speedily returned; after such a charge, they could but give one answer. Jeffreys, well pleased, stood up to deliver sentence, and there was a gleam of savage amusement in his eye, for he knew that he had a surprise in store for the prisoner—this obstinate fellow, out of whom, nevertheless, he still hoped to drag the desired evidence.

"Hugo Wharncliffe,"—the voice sought now to be only judicial and severe—"you are found guilty of the crime of misprision of treason; I therefore sentence you to be imprisoned during the remainder of your natural life, or during His Majesty's pleasure; and, in consideration of your extreme youth, I pronounce that the punishment of forfeiture of goods and chattels, or of profits arising upon lands belonging unto you, shall be commuted, and in lieu thereof you shall be whipped by the common hangman from Newgate to Tyburn."

A murmur of surprise and astonishment ran through the court, the barristers clustered together in little groups and whispered questions as to the legality of Jeffreys' sentence. Was there any precedent for such a proceeding? Could such punishment be legally substituted? Sir William Denham shed tears, Rupert swore under his breath, Randolph flushed slightly, but never took his eyes off his brother's face. Beyond a doubt, Hugo was startled; as the terrible doom was spoken, he looked up hastily, looked up incredulously. Surely his ears must have deceived him? Surely that punishment could never be his?

"My lord," he said, the colour surging up in his pale face, "I have not been guilty of a misdemeanour, and methinks your sentence is illegal."

They were bold words to speak to such an one as the Lord Chief Justice. Every one looked in amaze at the prisoner, who had dared to make such a remonstrance.

Jeffreys grew purple with wrath.

"What, sirrah!" he exclaimed, in thundering tones, "are you such an adept in legal matters that you can

instruct me? Say another word, and you shall stand in the pillory into the bargain! Gaoler! remove the prisoner at once."

Hugo bowed to his judge, and turned unresistingly towards the gaoler, who led him from the court. He felt stunned, stupefied; afterwards he recollected sorrowfully that he had not even looked at the Denhams or at Randolph, had not made the most of that brief glimpse of his old haunts. Unresistingly, silently, he was led down Westminster Hall, past the familiar bookstalls, through the staring crowd—the crowd which certainly was far greater than usual. So much greater that his attention was at length aroused; he came to himself, looked round, and wondered. His own case would certainly have failed to attract any special notice. For what, then, were these spectators waiting? and why did they all stand with their faces turned to the great door which he was just now approaching? His eyes followed theirs, he looked forth into the murky November atmosphere, and saw that Palace-Yard was full of soldiers.

"What is all this?" he asked of his gaoler.

"They say Colonel Sydney is to be brought up for trial," said the man indifferently.

Hugo's heart beat wildly. Sydney's prophecy was, then, coming true! "We shall meet again in London." Ay, indeed! In London, but in what a manner! The one coming forth from trial, knowing his fearful doom, the other going to receive the same mockery of justice at the hands of the same unrighteous judge.

But yet he should see his friend and teacher once more, and long months of suffering and confinement

had made Hugo thankful for small mercies. He should see him once again, should meet him as he had foretold at Penshurst. And now they had almost reached the great doorway, and the tramp of the soldiers overpowered the confused babel of voices in the hall. Still Hugo's gaoler led him on, hoping to get out of the building before the others entered it. But at the very threshold his aim was frustrated. Gripping his prisoner fast with one hand, he bade him wait till the incoming stream had passed by and had made motion more possible. Hugo, forgetting his doom, forgetting all but the thought of seeing Sydney, breathed a silent thanksgiving, and waited in eager expectation. Soldiers in bright uniforms passed by him, sweeping back the spectators ruthlessly, but taking no heed of the gaoler and prisoner in the doorway,—his very misery was, in this instance a gain. No one feared a rescue from him, no one cared for that one insignificant prisoner, with his hand-cuffs and his attendant gaoler.

He just stood against the old stone mouldings of the doorway, and the strong guard of soldiers passed on, and at length, looking out into the Palace Yard, Hugo could discern in the midst of them the dark, plumed hat which must belong to his friend. Slowly, steadily the procession moved forward. Sydney drew nearer. Hugo could see his face now; he looked older; there were deep lines in his forehead and around his mouth, his cheeks were hollow, and although he carried his head high, and bore his usual aspect of stern dignity, Hugo could see that he must have suffered much from the prison life, for all his air of health and strength was gone, and he evidently walked with

an effort. Would he see him? Would he look up? That was now the question which occupied all Hugo's thoughts. That terrible business-like tramp of soldiers' feet went in maddening monotony. His friend drew nearer and nearer. Would he not give one glance in his direction?

Ah, yes! at length his earnest gaze attracted the Republican's notice. He looked up just before reaching the threshold, and their eyes met. Surprise, pleasure, regret, sympathy, encouragement, all blent together in that one long look, which was all that the master could give his pupil.

"God bless you, dear lad," he said, and looked him through and through, looked at him long and lingeringly, as those look who are being borne away to some foreign land and bid a last farewell to the friends who stay behind.

And Hugo's grey eyes lit up with eager love, and the memory of his doom passed from him altogether as he repeated the words of Sydney's motto, *Sanctus amor patriæ dat animum.*

Sydney heard the words, turned back once more, and smiled, a smile which Hugo could always recall, a smile which lit up the stern, rugged face, and made it beautiful as a true and noble passion has power to do, be the features what they may.

Then the line of soldiers closed in around the prisoner, and soon all that Hugo could see was the broad-brimmed felt hat and the brown periwig, the one dark spot amid the bright uniforms and flashing bayonets.

"Now, sir," said the gaoler, giving his arm a little shake to arouse him.

He glanced back once more,—caught a last vision of the old hall, with its dark vaulted roof, its crowd of spectators, its bright line of infantry, and its patriot prisoner, then turned and followed his guide into the murky November air without.

CHAPTER IX.

TEMPTATION.

Virtue may be assailed, but never hurt;
Surprised by unjust force, but not enthralled;
Yea, even that which mischief meant most harm
Shall in the happy tidal prove most glory:
But evil on itself shall back recoil.

MILTON.

HUGO'S trial had taken place on the 7th of November, and the time passed on, and though each day he asked Scroop when his sentence was to be put into execution, the gaoler could never give him any definite reply. The uncertainty was terrible. He hoped much that now the trial was over the Denhams would have been allowed to visit him, but though they had applied for leave, Scroop told him that they had been peremptorily refused. He was deserted of all men, save Mr. Ambrose Philips, who still visited him with great assiduity and patience, dilating much on the horrors of the punishment which awaited him, and offering free pardon, if only he would appear at Colonel Sydney's trial.

It appeared that on the 7th of November Sydney had been brought up for trial and, after a stormy scene with the Lord Chief Justice, had been given a fortnight

in which to prepare his defence, being denied, however the aid of counsel, or even a copy of the indictment. This was all Hugo could learn, and he passed a hard fortnight. Early on the morning of the 20th he was summoned from his crowded ward; was it to go out to his fate, he wondered? but Scroop reassured him and spoke cheering words to him as they walked along the stone corridors.

"Keep up your heart, sir," he said with rough kindness. "There is a chance for you yet."

He then took his charge into a private cell, bidding him wash and change his clothes, and to make all speed about it.

Hugo, greatly wondering, did as he was told, and then followed the gaoler to the main entrance, where three officers in plain clothes awaited them. Scroop opened the heavy iron-studded door, and fresh air and golden sunshine found their way into the gloomy gaol and to the prisoner, who looked forth with eager eyes. He was hurried into a hackney coach which stood without, the officers got in with him, the door was shut, and he was driven off, whither he could only conjecture, since the blinds were down, and the officers would give no information whatever. Was it perhaps the day of Sydney's trial? Was he to be taken to Westminster Hall and induced to give evidence? If so, he resolved to take refuge in silence, he would not risk being confused by a perplexing string of questions. At length the coach stopped, he was hurried out of it and taken so speedily into an open doorway, that he had no time to make out what the place was, only he felt sure it was not Westminster. He was taken into a small wain-

scoted room, where a pleasant-looking, middle-aged man sat at a table writing; the officers withdrew and left them alone together.

"You will wonder who I am," said the stranger, motioning him to sit down, "I am Dr. Pratt, and I have been commanded to examine into the state of your health, Mr. Wharncliffe."

Hugo, who had struggled through his illness without any medical aid, submitted to a thorough examination, marvelling a little what was the meaning of it all. After a while it began to dawn upon him.

"Do you know that you are very much out of health?" said the doctor.

Hugo replied that he was quite aware of the fact.

"I fear there is one thing, however, of which you are not aware," said the doctor, kindly. "They tell me you are to-morrow to be whipped from Newgate to Tyburn. Now, in your present state of health such a punishment as that will cost you your life."

"To-morrow," repeated Hugo. "Will it be to-morrow?"

The doctor looked at him curiously and with some compassion.

"Ay, so they tell me. But you do not hear what is of far more importance,—I assure you that such a punishment will cost you your life."

"Yes, sir, I hear plainly enough," said Hugo, thoughtfully. "And, did life mean to you merely eternal Newgate, methinks you might look on death with other eyes."

The doctor rose hastily and took two or three turns up and down the room before again speaking.

"Well," he said at length, "I am sorry for you, sir; I have done what they bade me do and have given you fair warning. 'Tis not for me to argue with you, others will do that."

"Ay," said Hugo, smiling a little, "there is no lack of arguers. To listen to them is the employment of my life, and I thank you, sir, for sparing your breath and my patience."

He relapsed into silence and deep thought. It was to be to-morrow, then, to-morrow!

The doctor regarded him closely for a minute; then with a sigh and shake of the head, opened the door and summoned the officers.

In silence they led the prisoner up a winding staircase, dark and narrow, which opened into a large and handsomely-furnished bed-room; here an usher met them, and led them on through corridors and empty rooms to the door of an apartment which somehow had to Hugo a familiar air. When it was opened the first thing which met his gaze was the *Noli me Tangere* of Hans Holbein. He knew then that he was at Whitehall, and had been admitted by the private staircase, of which he had heard rumours in the old times. He breathed a little faster as the usher went on before to announce them, then returning bade them come in. How strangely different it was from that evening long ago, when he had last entered this room in company with the little Duchess of Grafton. Involuntarily he sighed. Life had looked so very bright to him that evening. Coming to himself, he noticed that his companions were bowing low. He too bowed mechanically, and then looking up saw that the King was sitting at

a table amusing himself by dissecting a little Dutch clock. He looked much older than when Hugo had last seen him, his face had lost much of its easy good-nature, he seemed gloomy and ill, while there was an unhealthy yellowish tinge in the whites of his eyes, and the lines and wrinkles in his face were very apparent.

"I would speak with the prisoner alone," he said, turning to the chief officer. "Hath he been searched?"

The officer, with many apologies, replied in the negative.

"Then let it be done," said Charles, querulously. "I marvel that in these days of treachery you bring a man from gaol into my presence with so little precaution."

The officer was about to lead Hugo from the room, when something in the prisoner's face made the King interfere.

"Nay, hold," he exclaimed. "We do but waste time, for now I think of it, this gentleman speaks the truth even to his liege lord. Have you aught concealed about you, Mr. Wharncliffe?"

Hugo opened his doublet, and produced a book, a tiny parcel, and a letter. The officer handed them to the King at his request, and then withdrew, leaving Charles alone with the prisoner. The book was Joyce's St. John; the King merely glanced at it, and to Hugo's relief, did not read the words written within. The parcel he unfolded; it contained a lady's handkerchief embroidered in one corner with a J. At sight of this he smiled broadly, and looked once more the good-natured monarch of former times.

"Ah! Mr. Wharncliffe," he said with a laugh. "'One touch of nature makes the whole world kin.' Kings or prisoners, we are after all alike in this particular."

Hugo made no reply, and managed to school his face into courteous passiveness. Inwardly he raged, and only longed to snatch Joyce's handkerchief from the King's hands.

Charles took up the letter. It was the one which Sydney had sent by Betterton, and the King's face grew dark as he read it. The perusal took him some time, and Hugo fell into a reverie. At another time the thought of a private interview with the King might have awed him a little, but kings sank into insignificance before the news which had just been given him. He was to suffer to-morrow—and to die. He had much to settle, much to think over, and but a few hours left him.

The King folded the letter, and looked across at the silent figure which stood opposite to him, taking in with his keen eyes every smallest detail, the clothes which seemed to hang loosely upon their wearer, the quiet pensive face, with its suggestion of latent power, the strange calmness of the expression both of the mouth and eyes.

It was a bitter November day; Hugo involuntarily glanced towards the fire, and the glance seemed to make an opening for an interview which to tell the truth, was sufficiently embarrassing to the King.

"You look cold," he said, not unkindly. "Do they not give you fires in Newgate?"

"Ay, my liege," said Hugo, smiling a little. "But

there are many of us, and the ward is large, therefore it is not often that one can come nigh it."

Never was there a less formal monarch than Charles; he motioned to the prisoner to sit down beside the hearth, and, leaving the table with the Dutch clock, he took a seat opposite him.

"You have seen the leech, they tell me," he resumed after a moment's pause. "What did he tell you?"

"That I have probably but one more day in this world, sire?" said Hugo, warming his hands at the fire.

"'Pon my soul, you seem to take it quietly enow," said the King. "Hath life no charms for one of your years?"

"It hath many charms, sire, while I sit here," said Hugo, glancing round the beautiful room. "But I have lived through months of misery, and in Newgate I find no charms, but hunger and thirst, cold and sickness, vile companions and days of wretchedness."

The King looked at him with uneasy compassion.

"Can you imagine what made me command your presence this day?" he asked.

"Hitherto there hath been but one end sought in every interview, my liege, therefore I presume that your Majesty also hath the same in view."

"Ay, they told me you were stubborn as a mule; therefore,"—and Charles smiled the peculiarly charming Stuart smile which had won so many hearts—"therefore I sent for you. Come, Mr. Wharncliffe, I believe you to be my loyal subject in your heart of hearts; you have but been led astray by evil men. I will overlook all the past, so only you consent to give evidence against

Colonel Sydney. You have withstood Ambrose Philips, but I think you will scarcely withstand your Sovereign when he asks you to do this as a personal favour. Believe me, it is but to few men that I could bring myself to make such a request."

Again that fascinating smile, that winning tone of voice. Hugo's heart beat fast, and the colour rose in his pale face.

"Sire, I crave your pardon," he said, "but it is impossible—altogether impossible."

"You do not realise the difference it will make," said the King, quietly. "Consent, and you are free this instant. Consent and I will give you a post about my person; and you shall have all that heart can wish. On the other hand persevere in your refusal, and on the morrow you will suffer the most horrible and degrading of punishments, intolerable to one of your birth and breeding, and in this worthless, miserable way you will end your life. Say, do you not shrink from this?"

"Yes," said Hugo;—nothing but that monosyllable, —no courteous title, no comment on the King's speech, but yet in the one word a whole world of expression, —all the concentrated pain of those weary months, all the terrible apprehension, all the shrinking sensitiveness, all the loathing of the shame and publicity, all the natural clinging to life and liberty.

The King was touched; there was a painful silence.

"Do you not see," he said, after a time, in his persuasive voice—"do you not see how great is the stake you hold? Here is a chance offered you of changing the history of your country."

Hugo looked up, the moment's agony was passed, there was a light in his sad eyes.

"But already that chance is mine, my liege. What if I do suffer to-morrow—what if I die? It is naught, for Colonel Sydney will be free."

"You are greatly mistaken," said Charles, his face darkening. "Colonel Sydney must die. Naught can alter that. The decree has gone forth, and it must be."

"But there is but my Lord Howard to witness against him," said Hugo. "He cannot be executed, my liege, on the word of one witness,—and such a witness!"

"I know of no cannots in such a case," said the King, coldly. "There were plenty of cannots at the trial of our Blessed Martyr, yet in the end his death was compassed."

"Ah! my liege, have you forgotten that 'twas Colonel Sydney who nobly refused to have aught to do with that sentence? Is this your reward for his honesty? Will you be less merciful to him, less generous? Nay, 'tis no question of generosity, but of simple justice, for he is not guilty. Oh! my liege, my liege, you cannot think that such a man as Sydney would stoop to such meanness,—would attack any man at a disadvantage! You cannot think that such a one would league himself with mere desperadoes like the Rye-House men!"

"I did not send for you to plead for Colonel Sydney," said the King gloomily. "I tell you he must die; say no more."

There was that in his tone which conveyed a terrible conviction to Hugo's heart. He could not conceal his anguish. For all these weary months had been

rendered bearable to him by the thought that he was suffering for his friend, buying his freedom. In fact, it was well known that the evidence against Sydney was so extremely shaky that almost everybody had deemed it probable that he would merely lie in the Tower for a time and then would be released without trial, or, if brought to trial, would certainly escape with a fine or imprisonment. Now for the first time the truth broke upon Hugo; he could do nothing for his friend. Regardless of the King's presence, he buried his face in his hands.

"I have spent my strength in vain!" he groaned.

"That is precisely what we have been urging upon you all these months, Mr. Wharncliffe," said the King more cordially. "You have indeed spent your strength in vain, do not into the bargain throw away your life; give me your word that instead of going forth to meet that insufferable punishment to-morrow, you will repair to Westminster to Colonel Sydney's trial, and you are free from this moment. Do you not see what a great opportunity we give you? In any case Colonel Sydney will die, but, by the help of your evidence, you may, as we said before, alter the history of this land, you may do us the greatest possible service. Say, lad, will you refuse me?"

"Your Majesty asks me to bear false witness against a friend," said Hugo. "How can I help but refuse?"

"Could you save him by silence, that were another matter," said Charles. "But you cannot do so, his fate is fixed. Therefore, for your own sake and for ours also, I beg you to think of what liberty means. Methinks you are like to break the heart of this fair Juliet,

or whatever her name be, who owns this handkerchief, an you choose death and dishonour."

Hugo's eyes filled with tears as a vision of Joyce rose before him. The King made haste to follow up his advantage.

"Only do this, Mr. Wharncliffe, and you shall wed this fair damsel and live in peace and honour. I give you my word that nothing shall come betwixt you."

"My liege," said Hugo, recovering himself. "Did I do this, I should not be fit to have her. I respectfully refuse your Majesty's request."

With a frown and a shrug of the shoulders, Charles crossed the room, and, opening the door which led into the adjoining library, spoke a few words to some one within. Hugo did not hear them, he was lost in thoughts of Joyce. He came to himself as the King returned, and the words fell upon his ears, "Stubborn as a mule, and if you read this letter you may perchance gather the reason."

Thereupon the King took up Sydney's letter and held it out to some one who followed him. Hugo glanced round, and with an irrepressible exclamation started to his feet, for the King had spoken to Randolph.

The brothers greeted each other silently. Then Randolph read the letter with darkening brow.

"'Tis this traitor who has led him astray!" he said at the close, and he would have torn the letter in pieces had not Hugo darted forward.

"Hold!" he cried, passionately. "The letter is mine, you shall not tear it." Randolph paused, and Hugo turned to the King. "My liege, I showed it at your

request; but it is mine, he has no right to it. Bid him restore it, sire, I beg you."

"Ay, give it back, Randolph," said the King, carelessly. "There, take back all of your treasures, I have no wish to deprive you of them, and you had best take leave of your brother, for you are not like to see him again, unless he succeeds better than we have done in making you hearken to reason."

So saying, Charles picked up a spaniel which had curled itself round in his vacant chair, and strolled into the library, fondling the dog's long ears.

"I have one more chance to offer you," said Randolph, sternly. "You have ungraciously refused the King's request, but you may yet save yourself by witnessing against Colonel Wharncliffe."

Hugo made a gesture of entreaty.

"For God's sake, begin not that again. Have I not said I will never do it? Have I not sworn it?"

"Yet all things are changed since your trial," said Randolph, much more gently. "Hugo, an you love me, save me from this misery, let me not have this disgrace thrust on to me! Save me from the pain and ignominy of having brother of mine whipped from Newgate to Tyburn like a common criminal."

"That lay in your power, but scarce in mine," said Hugo, hoarsely.

It was far harder to refuse Randolph than to refuse the King.

"It is in your power to be free to-morrow, by only promising to reveal what you know," said Randolph; and there was such real anxiety, such real solicitude in his face, that Hugo was obliged to take a turn up and

down the room before he could find voice to answer him.

"I will reveal nothing," he said at length. "I ought to have known nothing."

There was something in his manner which finally convinced Randolph of the hopelessness of his errand. His regret and anxiety and baffled hope turned to hot anger.

"You are a fool! a traitor!" he thundered. "Your blood be on your own head. Think not to lay the blame on me, an they whip you into a ghost. You are a traitor to your King, to your country, and to me! I disown you!"

With a gesture as if this were more than he could bear, Hugo turned away, Randolph, with blazing eyes, laid a strong hand on his shoulder, and forced him to turn round.

"For the last time," he said, speaking through his teeth, in a voice of repressed passion, "Will you shield this traitor no longer? Will you reveal what you know of Colonel Wharncliffe? Will you confess what was in the papers?"

The last time they had touched each other it had been in the dungeon. Some recollection of this came to both. Randolph would not suffer his face to move a muscle, though he was conscious of a sharp stab of pain, but Hugo's lips began to quiver.

"I will not,—I cannot!" he said in a choked voice. "Death itself, ay, and even your displeasure, were better than such—villainy!"

"To the death you deserve, then," said Randolph, removing his hand. "And may the devil take your soul!"

He turned to go, but before he had reached the door Hugo had sprung forward in an agony, and clutched at his arm.

"Randolph! Randolph!" he cried; and there was such anguish in his voice that, in the adjacent room, the King began to hum a love-song to himself to drown the sound. "Go not like that! Go not with such words! I shall never see you again! For God's sake, bid me farewell!"

"Unhand me!" said Randolph, roughly. Then, as Hugo still retained his hold, he shook himself free with a volley of oaths. "Have I not disowned you, and cursed you? What more would you have? Go to your fate! You are naught to me!"

He strode out of the room, and there was silence, until in a few minutes the King strolled back again, still fondling the little spaniel. Hugo had thrown himself into a chair, with his arms stretched across the table, and his face hidden. The King could hear his hard breathing; he watched him for a moment in silence.

"I have tried to save you," he said at length, regretfully. "'Tis your own doing—you will not be saved."

Hugo hastily raised himself. His face was white and haggard; but the King's words seemed to awaken in his mind a fresh train of thought, and for the time to divert him from the recollection of Randolph's cruelty.

"You would save me the unworthy, my liege," he exclaimed. "You would fain show mercy to me—then why not to one who deserves infinitely more at your hands. I deemed Colonel Sydney's fate rested with me, but I was cruelly deceived. His fate rests with your Majesty. You tell me that I may change the

course of history, but oh, sire! think how great a change might be effected by your Majesty. Think how by one just and generous deed your Majesty might endear yourself to future generations. My God! to think what power rests with one man!"

There was something so heartfelt in the last ejaculation that Charles was not offended by it, even though he felt reproached by the prisoner's searching look of mingled wonder and despair. That moment did for Hugo what all Sydney's teaching had failed to do,—it made him a true Republican. He glanced round the beautiful room, with its tapestried walls, its fine pictures, its curious clocks and pendules, its silken curtains and rich carvings; he looked long at the hard-featured man in black velvet doublet and brown periwig, who still idly toyed with his little dog. He looked at the sensual eyes, which glanced now at him, now at the spaniel; he looked at the voluptuous lips, about which there lurked now a faint smile, for to Charles there was always something laughable in earnestness.

"I see you deem the power ill-placed," said the King, good-humouredly. "Well, Mr. Wharncliffe, I need detain you no longer, for we do but waste time, and you will not serve my purpose."

With that he held out his hand graciously, intending to show a very unusual mark of confidence and condescension in permitting the prisoner to kiss it. But to his surprise Hugo drew back.

"Pardon me, sire," he said, bowing, and colouring crimson with the effort of uttering such words. "There is blood upon it."

The king swore a deep oath, and his dark face

turned almost purple for a minute. But recovering his self-possession he gave a careless laugh.

"You are a true disciple of Algernon Sydney," he said, marvelling a little that one of so sensitive a temperament should have adopted such principles, or have been capable of showing himself so disagreeably consistent with them. "I pardon your bluntness, however, for though you are no courtier, Mr. Wharncliffe, I believe you to be an honest man misled by those who should have known better. Remember that I tried to save you."

With that the officers were summoned, and Hugo, bowing low, looked his last at the King, and was led from the room.

CHAPTER X.

HUGO'S LAST DAY.

Love is a spirit high presuming,
That falleth oft ere he sit fast;
Care is a sorrow long consuming,
Which yet doth kill the heart at last;
Death is a wrong to life and love;
And I the pains of all must prove.

SIR PHILIP SYDNEY.

"SCROOP," said Hugo, as the gaoler led him back to his ward, "it is all up with me, and to-morrow you'll be troubled by me no longer. Say, will you do me one favour ere we part?"

The gaoler, to his secret indignation, felt a curious moisture about his eyes.

"Let's hear first what it may be," he said gruffly.

"'Tis no great matter," said Hugo. "An ink-horn, a goosequill, three sheets of letter paper, and to-night your promise to convey the budget to Sir William Denham's house in Norfolk Street."

The gaoler promised to grant him this favour, and, indeed, short of allowing him to escape, he would have done almost anything for him, for over his rough and semi-brutalised nature Hugo had acquired a most strange influence.

The contrast between Whitehall and the common-debtor's ward struck upon Hugo sharply as once more he found himself in his prison quarters. The ward was bitterly cold, though a fire burnt in the grate, over which several of the prisoners were making preparations for dinner, cooking such scraps of meat or vegetables as they had been able to secure, either with their own money or by the charity of the London shopkeepers. These were in the habit of placing stale bread, and such bones and scrapings as they could spare in baskets provided for that purpose with an appeal for "Some bread and meat for the poor prisoners in Newgate! For the Lord's sake pity the poor!"

Those who were not cooking were smoking, drinking, singing, dicing, or quarrelling, while above the confused uproar there rose an unusual sound—the sound of a child's voice, crying bitterly. Hugo, shaking himself free from the importunate questioners who would fain have learnt where he had been to, made his way to that part of the ward whence the crying came. A pitiful little group met his gaze as he drew near. Upon the floor sat a delicate-looking woman, trying to comfort the sobbing child in her arms; beside her, playing

unconcernedly with an apple, was a little fellow of three years old, his bright face quite free from care or anxiety, and contrasting painfully with that of the father who stood close by, a sombre-looking puritan upon whose face there now rested the shadow of grievous trouble. He was not an attractive-looking man, but he seemed so miserable, and looked so out of place amid his surroundings, that Hugo felt impelled to make some sort of advance to him.

"Methinks you are a new-comer, sir," he said, courteously, with a vivid recollection of his first day in the ward, and a longing to do what he could for this forlorn group.

"Yes, sir," said the Nonconformist, severely, "I am a new-comer, and I do not desire to make any acquaintance in this foul place."

Hugo felt baffled, but would not give in.

"'Tis ever harder to fresh comers," he said, quietly. "An you have not dined, I will go yonder and forage for you, for they serve strangers but roughly."

Without waiting for a reply he crossed the ward, and with his own money bargained with a prisoner, who was called the caterer, for enough dinner for himself and the strangers, returning with some very passable broth and half a loaf.

"A scanty meal, I fear," he said, smiling, "but the best I could get. The children look hungry."

It was not in the heart of man to resist such kindness. The sad-looking Nonconformist relented, and was soon dining with his fellow-prisoner.

"May I ask your name, sir?" he said at length. "I looked not to find such as you in this place."

"My name is Wharncliffe, and I got into trouble over the Plot. But this is like to be my last day here," said Hugo, quietly, having no mind to go into details just then.

"I, sir, am one Thomas Delaune," said the Nonconformist; "my trial doth not come on till the thirtieth of this month, but they would not admit me to bail, therefore I and my wife and children are forced to come here; I cannot persuade my wife to leave, nor indeed were it fitting that she remained alone with no protector."

"Yet is this a terrible place for her," said Hugo.

"So much the worse for the Episcopalians who force us into Newgate. My sole offence, sir, is that I accepted the invitation of one of your Church of England men, Doctor Calamy, in his sermons entitled *A Scrupulous Conscience,* to propose our doubts with respect to Church ceremonies. I accepted that invitation, and printed the reply *A Plea for Nonconformists.* And for printing that work am I here in this foul place."

"But surely Doctor Calamy will in that case procure your release?" said Hugo.

"I know not, sir," said Delaune. "Of an Episcopalian I never expect aught."

"I am one," said Hugo, smiling a little. "And now methinks you must have divined the fact, for you were loth to expect aught but ill from me!"

Delaune would fain have converted him there and then, but before long Scroop entered with the writing materials which Hugo had asked for, and excusing himself he retired to his own corner to write, as well as he could in the din and uproar, his three farewell letters,

one to Mary Denham, one to Algernon Sydney, one to Joyce.

It was then that he first fully realised what the sentence of death meant. They were terrible letters to write,—terrible when he thought of himself, more terrible when he thought of those to whom he was writing. It was quite dusk in the ward before he had finished—in fact, Scroop stood beside him waiting for the budget before he had made it ready; it had taken him far longer than he had thought, and had cost him much. The gaoler watched him in grim yet not unsympathetic silence.

"You will bear it yourself?" asked Hugo, sealing the packet and handing it to Scroop.

"What matter who bears it, so as it goes?" said the gaoler.

"It matters to me," said Hugo, "because I trust you, Scroop."

"Well, then, I will bear it," said the gaoler, and without another word he left the ward.

Hugo looked wistfully after the budget; then, as the door was closed and locked behind the gaoler, he covered his face with his hands. He had spoken boldly at Whitehall, had thought of the miseries of his life at Newgate, but fresh from that last letter to Joyce a wild clinging to life, a wild hope of escape, an intolerable longing for one more sight of his love had overmastered him. With all the vividness of a lively imagination, he lived through the horrible fate that awaited him on the morrow—lived through the pain and the shame and the indignity, struggled in the death-agony, till his heart sickened and his brain reeled. Not even the quiet of

the condemned cell was to be his, for he was not condemned to death, only he had been warned of his fate. Laughter and brutal jests fell upon his ear; the ward seemed like a hell that night, yet that night, for the first time, he nearly succumbed to its temptations.

A number of drunken revellers were sitting not far from him; their noisy song reached him distinctly in his dusky corner; he watched the group with a sort of fascination, and listened to the following words:—

"And when grim death doth take my breath,
He'll find me with boon comrades merry;
He'll find me drinking, drinking deep,
Sing derry down, down derry!
Death we defy! Pain comes not nigh
While drinking, drinking, drinking!"

He sprang to his feet, and was on his way to join the merry party, when something dragging at his doublet made him pause. He looked down, and saw Delaune's little child. All the afternoon he had been contentedly trundling his apple about the ward; now he had cut it in half, and, hungrily eating one bit, held the other up to Hugo. It diverted him from his purpose; he took the child on his knee, touched with the little thing's love and gratitude. His childish prattle made him smile.

Laughingly they fed each other with the apple, Hugo making a feint of eating a little to please the child. At last, when all was finished, the little one began to yawn and rub his eyes.

"Tom sleepy!" he said, piteously,—"no bed for Tom!"

Hugo was roused by this remark; the ward was

terribly crowded that night, for in the last few days there had been many fresh arrivals. He looked round and saw that Delaune and his wife and her babe were sitting all huddled up together on a rough wooden bench at the other side of the room. They looked so miserable that he forgot his own misery in pitying them. What could be done for them? He looked at his own particular corner and his uncomfortable plank bed. It would be better than nothing. Examining the place carefully, he found two nails in the angle of the wall; he tried hanging his cloak across the corner, but it made a very ineffectual screen. Just at that minute Scroop returned to the ward.

"Have you borne the letter?"

Then, as the gaoler nodded, Hugo placed in his hand one of his few remaining coins.

"There is one thing more I would fain have. 'Tis the last favour I will ask of you. I want a piece of sacking—a large piece."

The gaoler muttered something inarticulate, but went away, returning in a few minutes with a piece large enough to screen off as much of the crowded ward as was at Hugo's disposal. He had some difficulty in getting it up; in doing it he forgot his own fate, and was for the time almost happy, while Tom sat on the floor watching him and sucking his thumb philosophically.

"Now, little imp," said Hugo, smiling, "come and peep at your new chamber."

Tom lifted the sacking and looked in at the dim expanse of planks.

"Comfy," he said, clapping his hands and laughing merrily, "comfy!"

That was reward enough for Hugo. He laughed a little, caught the child up in his arms and strode across the ward to speak to the parents.

"I have done what I can for you, sir," he said to Delaune. "Your wife will find a sort of rough shelter yonder; I beg that you will take my quarters for to-night, for I shall be gone on the morrow."

Delaune grasped his hand and thanked him warmly. His wife did not speak, but as she rose, with her baby in her arms, she looked up at Hugo with a gratitude in her eyes which lingered pleasantly in his memory. But not even the charms of the dusky little corner behind the curtain could tempt little Tom to desert his new friend; he clung tightly to him, and begged so piteously to be "kept" that Hugo yielded, and, finding by good chance a vacant place beside the hearth, crouched down on the ground as near the fire as might be with the child in his arms.

"Take me wiv you on the morrow," said Tom, sleepily.

There was such a babel all around that they could talk without the risk of being overheard.

"I cannot do that."

"Why can't you take Tom too?"

"Because I am going to die."

"To Die," repeated Tom, dreamily. "Where is Die? I would like to go too."

"Not yet, poor little imp," said Hugo, smiling sadly. "There kiss me and go to sleep."

The child looked up at him for a moment with his solemn, sleepy eyes. "Good night," he said, drowsily. "But I wish little children could go to Die. Die is better than prison, isn't it?"

"Yes," said Hugo, with a quiver in his voice, "it is better. Good-night, little one."

The rosy lips met his, and almost the next minute the child was fast asleep.

After awhile the drunken revel ended, oaths, songs, laughter died away into silence, sleep fell on the wretched prisoners, and stillness reigned in the ward; by the light of the dying embers Hugo could dimly discern the outline of the prostrate forms, and the untroubled face of the little sleeping child on his knee. He was glad to be quiet; the solemn stillness seemed to calm his mind, he could think of the morrow with less dread, could see through to the other side of the suffering.

"Was it not for Joyce's father? Was it not in a sense for Sydney?" He could think of Joyce more calmly now, Joyce whom he had bidden to hold herself as free, Joyce who might now be wooed and won by other men. That thought did not torture him as it had done when Scroop had borne away the budget. He lost the thought of himself, thought only of her in her guileless simplicity, her sweet purity. Lovingly, and with much joy mingled with the pain, he lingered over his recollections of her. In the dreary Newgate ward there rose up for him the fairest of visions, the sweet, sunshiny face, the blue eyes that had always met his so innocently and confidingly, the tender little mouth with its mingled sweetness and firmness. Never once had he seen a shade of aught that was hard or bitter in her expression. Even on that memorable night when he had made his confession to her, when with natural indignation she had turned upon him with the question,

"Why did you seek to injure my father?" there had been nothing petty or personal in her anger. And how soon her tender charity had sought an excuse for him! how quick she had been to check that impulse to blame another!

Far on into the night he sat dreaming of her, or rather wakefully living through again that brief passage in his life which had changed his whole world, as love does change the world of all of us, for good or for ill. His arms grew stiff and weary with holding little Tom, but he could not bear to disturb the child, and at length from excessive weariness he fell asleep, forgetting the fatigues of the long and eventful day, nor bestowing one thought upon them in his dreams. For two hours he slept as tranquilly as a child. But towards morning he dreamed strangely.

He thought he was once more in Germany; Count Hugo's castle on the Rhine once more rose before him, with its brown and rugged towers, and its battlements sharply defined against a clear frosty blue sky. Something of stir and commotion in the air warned him of change in that quiet country-side, and drawing nearer to the foot of the hill on which the castle stood, he saw that it was in a state of siege, and that the enemy had pitched their tents in the valley. He could hear the busy sounds of life coming from the camp, could see the soldiers fetching water from the Rhine, and at the door of the largest tent, from which floated the royal pennon, he could see the King and Randolph talking together. Just then he became aware of a sound of voices, and looking up he saw close beside him an old peasant talking to a little crying child.

He approached them, and asked who the child was, and what he did there.

"Sir," said the old peasant, "he is the son of Count Hugo up yonder at the castle, but the Count's enemies have taken him prisoner, and though they treat him kindly and let him roam about thus far, the little lad frets for his father, and to be in the old castle once more." Then turning to the child, "Yet do I not tell thee, boy, that 'tis best here, where thou canst eat and drink as thou wilt with no let or hindrance."

But the child only sobbed the more, calling for its father, and for one to bear it home.

Hugo looked irresolutely, now at the royal tent, now at the crying child. Finally he thought of good Count Hugo, and looked at the castle high up on its lofty rock.

"They have no right, no right to steal you!" he cried, suddenly snatching up the child in his arms.

The peasant whimpered something about the "divine right of kings!"

"Nothing is divine save the just and the loving!" cried Hugo. "He who is just and true and wise, he who lives for the people, is king of men—none other."

"Bear me home!" sobbed the child. "Bear me home!"

Then he gathered himself together, and with one glance at the hostile camp below, began to scale the steep rock, and he knew that to scale it meant death to himself, yet hoped that he might shield the child, and struggle on till he reached the summit. All around him whizzed the arrows, one pierced his shoulder, then another and another, till he was like the picture of

St. Sebastian in the church, and growing faint with loss of blood he staggered, and almost fell with his burden. But the child was unhurt, that nerved him to struggle on to the end, nerved him to resist the creeping numbing cold that made his limbs almost powerless. At last with a mighty effort he dragged himself to the summit of the rock, and staggered along the narrow platform which led from the drawbridge; the watchman caught sight of the child, ordered the bridge to be lowered, and gave the word in the castle. There was a great shout of joy raised, and a sound of doors opening and many feet approaching, while Hugo staggered across the courtyard, and laid his burden at the feet of his great namesake. And when, exhausted by the effort, he lay a-dying, the Count bent over him with a beautiful smile on his face, and whispered in his ear so that he alone might hearken,

"It is the *Christ-Kind* you have carried."

Then yet another form drew near, a black-robed form with stern face; and drawing closer so as to hide all sight of Count Hugo and the child, he laid a cold hand upon his shoulder, and said,

"Your time is come! Has death no terrors for you, that you lie thus smiling?"

"No terrors!" he exclaimed, conscious of a great joy in his heart of which he could not speak. "No terrors! I die for the *Christ-Kind.*"

He opened his eyes. Scroop stood beside him, shaking his shoulder roughly but not unkindly.

"Well, sir, they most of them sleep quiet enough, poor souls, before they go out to die," he said, regard-

ing Hugo curiously; "but I never yet saw one who could speak of dying with a smile."

Hugo glanced round the ward, where, in the dim light of the winter morning, he could discern the worn faces of his fellow-prisoners.

"It is death that I am leaving here," he said, thoughtfully. Then, kissing the little child, who still slept in his arms, he placed him carefully on the floor, covering him with his cloak. "Be kind to that little imp for my sake, Scroop," he said.

The gaoler promised, and led him out of the ward to his own room, where he had prepared a breakfast for him. Hugo was touched. He tried to eat enough of the broiled beef, and to drink enough of the spiced ale, to satisfy Scroop, who hovered over him with a restless look, which sat strangely on his hard, grim features. Then came a final interview with Ambrose Philips, one more ineffectual effort to make him yield; but neither threats, nor reproaches, nor taunts could ruffle him that day. Philips retired, owning himself beaten, and, almost immediately after, Scroop returned.

"You have but a couple of minutes more, sir," he said, his gruff voice a degree gruffer than usual.

"It is enough," said Hugo, quietly; and, kneeling, he once more repeated Mary Denham's collect, breathed the names of Joyce, Colonel Wharncliffe, Sydney, Randolph; then, rising to his feet, threw aside his doublet and vest.

"I am ready," he said. "Lead on."

Scroop thought of that first night, when he had led him into Newgate, and his heart smote him.

"I have oftentimes been rough and rude with you, sir," he said, regretfully; "I crave your forgiveness."

"I am sure you have it," said Hugo, smiling a little. "I should have fared ill without you, Scroop."

After that he did not speak, but walked steadily along the cold stone passages. Then the great door was thrown wide, and he was led forth. The cold November wind on his bare shoulders made him shiver slightly; but, with head erect, he walked on, fearlessly taking in all the details of the scene: the staring crowd, the cart and horse, Ketch, the hangman, armed with the terrible "cat," and the prison official waiting with a cord to bind his arms. He had scarcely advanced more than two or three paces, however, when there was a movement in the crowd, as of some one forcing his way to the front. A moment more, and old Jeremiah rushed forward, his blue livery half torn off his back, his white hair streaming in the wind, his wrinkled face wet with tears.

"My master! my dear young master!" he cried. "They cannot keep me from you now!"

"Why, Jerry!" exclaimed Hugo, his face lighting up; "to see you is almost worth a whipping. Come! there is no call to weep over me. I shall, at any rate, be a man of action to-day!"

But at this Jeremiah only wept the more.

"Do not grieve," said Hugo, in a low voice. "'Tis for the sake of one whom you love. A less glorious and sure way of helping him than that which the Ironside effected at Marston Moor, but—perhaps not wholly inglorious neither."

In comforting the old serving-man he had forgotten

to feel the humiliation of being tied to the cart's tail, and the presence of the old soldier gave him a curious strength.

"They cannot part me from thee now, lad," said Jeremiah, dashing the tears from his eyes that he might see more clearly.

"No," said Hugo, thoughtfully. "Freedom lies along this road, Jerry."

And as the procession moved off, and that last terrible journey began, he said to himself again and again words which had often comforted him in Newgate:—

"Sleepe after toyle, port after stormie seas,
Ease after warre, death after life, does greatly please."

And Jeremiah walked side by side with his master.

CHAPTER XI.

JOYCE'S JOURNAL.

When sorrow would be seen,
In her bright majesty—
For she is a queen—
Then is she dressed by none but thee;
Then, only then, she wears
Her richest pearls—I mean thy tears.

Not in the evening's eyes,
When they red with weeping are,
For the sun that dies,
Sits sorrow with a face so fair;
Nowhere but here doth meet
Sweetness so sad, sadness so sweet.

CRASHAW.

NOVEMBER, 1683.—I never thought months could seem so long. But five have passed by since the day

Hugo was borne away from Mondisfield, and yet the time seems to me more like to five years. We have tried to go on just as usual, thinking it best so, but oftentimes it has been hard to do it. A great gloom has fallen on the whole place. The corn ripened as usual, and we went into the harvest-field and watched the men at work and helped the women to bind the sheaves, and afterwards went a-gleaning as usual to help some of the poorer village folk. Then came the in-gathering, but with no harvest supper, for how could we feast and make merry with my father in exile. After that came the apple-gathering, which made me think of that October day last year when I first saw Hugo. It seems to me now passing strange to think of that duel upon which so much hinged. It frightens me to recollect how much has in truth sprung from just that simple fact that Evelyn and I went into the road a-blackberrying. If we had not gone there would have been no duel, no meeting of Hugo, no delay of their cavalcade at the "White Horse," no knowledge of Mr. Ferguson's visit, no dispersal of the congregation in the barn, no secret clue for cousin Randolph to work upon, no temptation for Hugo, no exile for my father. I suppose it is indeed ever so, and that upon all our trivial actions and words there follow long chains of results that we little dream of at the time. And this, methinks, is a conviction which should sober us impulsive folk, and make us seek right patiently the true wisdom.

April, 1684.

I was writing this in the musician's gallery, a place I must ever love now above all others in the house,

when I heard the galloping of horse's feet in the drive. I thought it might be the post-boy with perchance a letter from my father, for now that he is in safety at Amsterdam he has ventured to write to my mother more than once. Running down the stairs with all speed I hurried out to the door, and had flung it open just as the post-boy reined in his steed, a gallant bay, with wreaths of foam on his neck, for the post ever rides apace. The boy raised his hat respectfully, and took from his bag a letter—actually a letter for me—the first I ever received in my life. I knew in an instant that it must be from Hugo, and this I suppose must have shown in my face, for the post-boy, well pleased, muttered something which I had rather he had not so much as thought, and made me blush hotly. I ran quickly in search of my mother, having no money to pay the postage, and, finding her in the north parlour, showed her the letter.

"Stay here and read it, my little daughter," she said. "I will pay the man."

I needed no second bidding, for a great hope had arisen in my heart. Surely if Hugo had at length found means to write to me then he must be at liberty once more, or at any rate in less strict durance. I know not what vain castle in the air I had raised even while breaking the seal, for I fear it hath ever been my way to hope, and to look for a speedy end to all care, since trouble and sorrow doth seem foreign to one's nature. Thus the sudden downfall of the vain hopes made the reading of that letter all the harder; I came more nigh to swooning than ever before in my life, yet did not wholly give way, for we Wharncliffes are strong and

healthy, and do not easily succumb. My mother was some time gone; I had taken that one fatal glance at the letter, and then, after a long pause, had been able to read it steadily through before she returned. It was very clearly written, indeed it was the most beautiful and delicate handwriting I had ever seen. This was how it ran, I copy it here in my journal, for I should like the descendants to know how true and noble my Hugo was, and naught can show that so well as his own words.

"My dear Love,

At length there comes to me an opportunity of writing to you. My gaoler, to whom I owe much, and who of late hath ever been kind to me, having promised to bear this letter to one Mistress Denham, a friend of mine, who, knowing your name, will without risk be able to forward this to you. My dear heart, you will pardon these ill-penned lines, but I write in the midst of noise and confusion in the common prison, and my mind is like to the ward—full, too, of confusion and trouble. I do not know whether perchance you have had news of my trial, which took place on the seventh day of this month. My sentence was, as I had looked for, life-long imprisonment, with, moreover, some additional severities, which, I am well informed, are like to cost me my life. But, dear heart, these said severities are in truth a kindness, for a long life in Newgate would be a sore trial and temptation. Did you know how terrible have been these five months since I parted from you—did you know what pain and suffering I have borne, and what grievous temptation hath assailed me,

you would rejoice when hearing that he who loves you —he whom you love—is likely to die shortly.

"Sleepe after toyle, port after stormie seas,
Ease after warre, death after life, does greatly please."

Often have those words comforted me in my dungeon; and though there doth at times come the craving for life, and the pining for liberty, and most of all the longing for you, my dear one, yet I willingly embrace a death which means the safety and life of your father, and which may perchance blot out the memory of the wrong I wrought him. I pray you give my duty to both your father and mother, and I crave their forgiveness for all my offences. Especially I trust they will not deem that I did very wrong in speaking to you that day of my love. In any case tell them this,—that your love hath been to me as a strong shield, and hath saved me from hell on earth.

"When all is said, however, it doth still remain that our joy hath been cruelly short-lived. But at least let me feel that I have not spoilt your life—let me believe that you will not be the poorer all your days for this brief interlude. Above all things, I would have you happy. To have saddened those dear eyes, to have darkened the life I found so bright—that would indeed be a hard fate. Dear one, I pray that you will not let this fate be mine.

"The gaoler waits, and these poor words must go. Read in them, dearest heart, the love I cannot write. I dreamed last night that your father was at home and in safety once more, that the household was again bright and peaceful, and that you were standing by the elm-trees at the gate, happy and smiling as was ever your

wont. I think the dream will come true; I pray you to let your share in it be true, and wherever I may be I think I shall know it. My dear one, I kiss your hands. And so farewell.

"Yours in all love and devotion,

"HUGO WHARNCLIEFE."

"Written in Newgate, the 20th November, 1683."

I do not well know what happened afterwards, only the day was lived through somehow, and the next, and the next, till a sennight had gone by. My mother kept me much with her, and taught me some difficult new stitches in embroidery, and drove over with me to St. Edmondsbury in the coach, and bought some fine woollen material, which she said I might embroider as a gown for the little daughter of the vicar of Osedean. I found a strange comfort in learning this embroidery, which was odd for one who cared so little for needle-work; but I seemed to have no heart for books or music, and it was a sort of relief to stitch my grief into that little gown. And at length hope, which should have been killed by that letter, sprang up once more, and I could not but think that God would not let Hugo perish in that horrible place, but that he would save him and bring him back to us. My mother thought there might be some mention of him perchance in the news-letter, and oh! how I watched for its advent! There was, unluckily, a snow-storm which made it two days later than usual, but at length one snowy fore-noon there rode up the drive Sir Henry Dale's groom —Sir Henry being a neighbour of ours some six miles hence, and who undertakes to pass us on the news-

letter, which we in turn send to the vicar of Osedean. I was sitting in the window-seat of the north parlour when I saw the groom ride over the bridge, but though so longing to have the letter I could not stir an inch to get it—could only wait what seemed an eternity while Roger took it in at the front door, and paused to fetch the man a tankard of ale to hearten him for his return journey. Then at last—and how plainly I can see it all!—Roger came into the parlour bearing the letter on the salver and handed it unconcernedly to my mother, rubbing the salver with his coat-sleeve as soon as she had removed the damp budget, lest the silver, which is the pride of his dear old heart, should be tarnished.

Then my mother broke seal of the budget and hastily read through the letter. I saw her turn very pale as she read, and then, unable to bear the waiting any longer, I sprang forward, begging her to tell me the worst at once.

"It is as we feared, my little daughter," said my mother, putting her arm round me, and trying to check her tears. "But in this be comforted, dear child—your lover has died right nobly."

I think my heart must have stopped beating; it seemed to me that I left off living, and when life began again I was years older. And yet there we were still in the north parlour—the room where he told me he loved me—and there were all the portraits looking down at us just as they had looked down upon Hugo and me that midsummer day; but he, my own true love, was dead!

I wanted to know more, and held out my hand for

the letter, and, after a moment's hesitation, my mother gave it to me, and pointed to the paragraph. I remember it came after a far longer one about the illness of the King of Portugal, the queen's brother, and the news-letter discoursed much as to whether the whole town would be put into solemn mourning as well as the Court upon his death, which appeared imminent.

Then followed these lines:—

"Some talk hath been raised about the sentence passed by the Lord Chief Justice on a young Templar who, it is said, had much knowledge of the Plot, which, however, naught would induce him to reveal. The said Mr. Hugo Wharncliffe, who is well known in the town on account of his fine voice, was yesterday morning whipped from Newgate to Tyburn by the common hangman. It is said that he was warned by the authorities that he ran much risk, seeing that he was weakened by illness and long imprisonment; but, though offered a free pardon did he but reveal what he knew against the enemies of the government, he persisted in his obstinate silence, and, to the general regret, hath in this useless way sacrificed a life which promised great things. His friends were in waiting at Tyburn with a hackney coach, to which he was carried in a dying condition, and, though a leech was at hand to render prompt assistance, Mr. Wharncliffe expired just as they reached Newgate."

After that came an account of the trial of Mr. Algernon Sydney, but I could not read it then, because I could think of nothing but that awful scene which the news-letter put so blandly in a few cold lines.

Oh, my love! my love! do they call yours an "Ob-

stinate silence!" Do they seek to shelter themselves by casting blame on you? As though, forsooth, you were like to save yourself! As though you were like to ruin those for whom already you had done so much.

Just a few more words to this journal, which began so peacefully and ends so sorrowfully. After hearing of Hugo's death I had a long illness. I am well again now, and my hair has grown once more and my colour come back, yet there are times when it is hard to try to keep my love's last wish and request. It seems to me like one of these April days, when you have been glorying in the sunshine, and all at once the sun goes behind a cloud and leaves you shivering. And my sun will not come out again. Yet is the sun eternal, and shining still behind the blackness that separates us, and my true love is at rest, and has left pain and grief for ever.

The bad winter—the worst we have had in England for many generations—has kept us much to ourselves, and many of the news-letters have never been forwarded, so impassable were the roads. My mother wrote to cousin Randolph Wharncliffe, but he took no notice of her letter, therefore we have had no further account of Hugo's last days. But we have learnt of his trial from John Pettit at the "White Horse," who had to appear as witness, and grumbled sore at having to make so long a journey. He must have left London just before that 21st of November, which must ever be for me a day of mourning. But, since he had not seen his father for nigh upon fourteen years, he tarried at Bishop-Stortford on his way back, and so did not bring us his news until after the fatal news-letter had reached us. I re-

member well the day of his coming. It was just before I was taken ill, and I was sitting with my spinning-wheel in the gallery when Pettit was shown into the hall, and my mother made him sit by the hearth and tell all he could about the trial. And when I heard how Hugo would ask of his brother no question at all, and that he had made his own defence right ably, and had ever kept a steady and even temper, though that bad judge treated him so ill, then a glow of pride, almost of happiness, filled my heart, even though I could not help but weep when Pettit told how wan and ill he seemed, so changed he hardly knew him for the same.

But all that is over now, nor will I dwell on that last terrible day, which yet will haunt me in my dreams. I will not think of my love's pain and suffering, but of his courage and of his noble constancy, of his patience, and of his forgiveness of the one who had wronged him most of all. Thinking thus will, I know, help me to keep his last wish, and to bear a cheerful heart and face. It shall never be said that he darkened my life! Nay, rather—my life, God helping me, shall be a better, and truer, and fuller thing for these brief months.

There is like to be much on hand in these next weeks, for my father desires us to join him at Amsterdam, seeing that there is as yet no likelihood of his being able to return to England. He can no longer endure to have us away from him, and so, if all things can be arranged, we are to leave Mondisfield before long, a kinsman of my mother's taking charge of the property until—if ever—we return. I think we shall return, because I cannot believe that Hugo's life was

given in vain. I think my father will one day have his own again. I think Hugo's dream will come true.

CHAPTER XII.

WOMAN'S WORK.

A heart unspotted is not easily daunted.
King Henry VI.

THE King paced to and fro in his private room at Whitehall, the room in which he had interviewed Hugo. He was evidently ill at ease, the wrinkles and lines on his forehead which Hugo had noted on the previous day were now far deeper, and a lameness to which he had of late been subject showed more than ever in his gait. The ticking of his many clocks and pendules annoyed him. He ordered one of his attendants to stop them, with the exception of one which stood upon the carved mantelshelf. Then, further giving orders that he should be left alone, he continued his restless walk, glancing now at the clock, now at the picture of Hobbes just above it, now at the *Noli me tangere* opposite the door. The clock struck six, and the King muttered an impatient oath.

"So late!" he exclaimed, under his breath. "I doubt matters have, after all, gone ill. Damnation take Jeffreys, if he fails in getting the verdict!"

He continued his restless walk for some quarter of an hour, making every now and then ejaculations of impatience until at length one of the ushers appeared at the door.

"The Lord Chief Justice is in waiting, and craves an audience of your Majesty," he announced.

The King gave orders that he should be at once admitted to the presence, and in a few moments the choleric-looking Jeffreys, with his large, heavy-jawed, sensual face, was ushered into the King's private room.

"I bring your Majesty good news," he said, modulating his harsh voice to a fawning and courtier-like tone. "The jury have brought in a verdict of 'guilty.' I and my learned friends, having consulted together how we might best compass the death of Colonel Sydney, have succeeded indifferently well, my liege."

He smiled blandly, but it was a smile that made even the King wince.

"Did the jurors take long in agreeing?" asked the King, sharply.

"Well, my liege," said Jeffreys, "I own that they were inclined to be restive, even though they had been most carefully selected for the purpose," he chuckled to himself involuntarily. Then, remembering that he was in the King's presence, went on, more soberly—"Knowing the importance of the case, I made bold, my liege, to follow them out of court, on pretence of taking a cup of sack, and then I took the opportunity to give them more particular instructions. After that, they were but a half-hour gone, and returned with the verdict against Colonel Sydney. I trust your Majesty is satisfied?"

"Quite satisfied," said the King; but nevertheless there were signs in his face that he was passing through some inward struggle.

"My liege," said Jeffreys, "I trust you will pardon

me the boast, but I must say that no man in my place hath ever rendered unto any King of England such services as I have rendered your Majesty this day. Not only have I made it pass for law that any man may be tried by jurors who are not freeholders, but I have made it pass also that one witness can condemn a man, provided there be any concurrent circumstances. Your Majesty is well rid of this traitor."

"That is very true," said the King. "I am aware that you have rendered me very valuable services in an exceptional case. Wear this in remembrance of the day;" he drew from his finger a costly ring, and handed it to the Lord Chief Justice, who withdrew with many expressions of gratitude and loyalty.

When he was gone, the King flung himself back in a chair, with a sigh of weariness and disgust. He had obtained his wish, but he had obtained it in a way which jarred upon his better nature; and then, moreover, it sickened him to think that fiends incarnate like Jeffreys would fawn upon him and kiss his hand, while such as Hugo Wharncliffe shrank back, and told him to his face that he was no better than a murderer. He looked at the place where the ring had lately been, as though he half expected to see there the bloodstain of which Hugo had spoken. Then, suddenly remembering that by this time the speaker's fate would have been decided, he hastily summoned one of his attendants.

"Have you heard aught of Mr. Wharncliffe?" he asked, not trying to conceal his anxiety.

It was well known, however, that the young tenor had always been a favourite with the King, and the gentleman showed no surprise.

"I heard at noon to-day, my liege, that he died as they bore him back to Newgate," he replied. "But it was no more than a rumour, and possibly ill-founded."

"I wish to know the truth," said Charles, hastily. "Let inquiry be made at once, and bring me full particulars."

The messenger returned more speedily than the King had expected.

"Tidings have this moment arrived, my liege, that the report was false. Mr. Wharncliffe did but swoon as they bore him back to the gaol. His friend, Sir William Denham, had brought to his assistance a noted leech, and he recovered the prisoner after a while. They say he may last out the night, which will save the scandal of his dying on the road."

"Then he is, after all, dying?" said the King, with keen disappointment in his voice. "As well have died at once."

"Yes, my liege, they say he is dying past dispute; but 'tis surely better that he should die in private, as it were. A death on the road would provoke comment and give scandal."

"Confound scandal!" said the King, angrily. "What is that to me, when I would have the man alive, not dead? A fig for scandal! There, leave me! I would be alone."

Hugo's words returned to him now very bitterly. "My God! to think what power rests with one man!"

Power did in truth rest with him! Would that it did not. He hated his power just then, for he was keenly conscious that he had abused it. Gladly, oh, how gladly would he at that moment have changed

places with any one of his subjects. Once more it seemed to him that the white haggard face was raised to his with that passionate appeal for mercy towards Sydney, or, rather—for there had been pride mingled with the request—not for mercy, but merely common justice. And what had he done? He had allowed the noble petitioner, the man whom he knew to be innocent, to be flogged to death, while the man who had violated the law and desecrated justice he had sent away with a special token of his royal favour. Should he even yet save Sydney's life? Should he make even now an effort to repair the horrible injustice which he had countenanced and rewarded! A strong desire for right took possession of him. After a moment's thought he did the wisest thing he could have done, and sent a message to Lord Halifax, desiring to speak with him.

Halifax was Sydney's nephew by marriage, and had for some time been one of the ruling spirits of the day. He was the head of those men in the state who were called "Trimmers," but he himself was loth to be looked upon as the head of any party, even of that which avoided all extremes, for he disapproved of party altogether, and while disagreeing very much with his uncle's views, disapproved quite as much of the King's despotic rule. He was a keen, clever, broad-minded man, and a man who invariably sided with the persecuted. His interview with the King was not long, but it was fruitful in results.

That evening, when Hugo lay dying in Newgate, and Algernon Sydney in his cell in the tower sat writing the account of his mockery of a trial to the King, and praying for an audience, Charles himself was

quietly stealing down his back staircase alone and unattended. Outside he found in waiting a hackney-coach, and within Lord Halifax, who greeted him as though he were some ordinary friend, and bending forward bade the coachman drive to the house of one Major Long in the City. The King spoke little, but he looked eager and anxious, and from time to time glanced out of the window of the coach to see what progress they were making. Arriving at length at Major Long's house, they were ushered into a large room hung with tapestry and dimly lighted by wax candles; the King made Halifax go first, and kept his own face wrapped in a muffler until the servant who had admitted them was out of sight, then he tossed it impatiently aside, and crossing the room, which was empty, stood before the fire, the look of impatient anxiety in his face deepening ever moment.

"Is this the way for a son to treat a father?" he exclaimed at last, turning angrily to Halifax. "I did wrong in coming here; I compromise my dignity. Doth he keep me waiting as though I were some churl?"

"My liege, believe me, the Duke is entirely repentant," said Lord Halifax. "But doubtless he dreads the meeting, fearing your displeasure. And for your dignity, my liege, methinks it will not be compromised by going half-way to meet the erring one like him we read of in the Scriptures."

As he spoke the door opened and there entered a young man, negligently dressed in a suit of shabby black velvet. He was the prodigal in question, Charles' favourite son, the Duke of Monmouth, who, having compromised himself several times by countenancing in-

significant and unsuccessful plots, was now in hiding in the City, having contrived to escape when the news of the Rye-House Plot was first published. His face, though a trifle too broad for its length, was strikingly handsome, the dark eyes were large and liquid, the contour of the cheeks beautiful as a woman's. But although his appearance, combined with the unmistakeable Stuart charm of manner, precisely fitted him for the *rôle* of popular idol, he was altogether lacking in the manliness, the self-reliance, and the dogged perseverance which must characterise a popular leader.

Lord Halifax looked uneasily from one to the other, upon the King's brow stern displeasure strove hard to subdue the tenderer feelings which were at once excited by the sight of his favourite, while Monmouth, though extremely fond of his father, seemed little inclined at that moment to own himself in the wrong, or humbly to sue for forgiveness. The peacemaker, like all peacemakers, had an anxious time of it, particularly as he was naturally unable to take any part in the interview, and could only view it from a discreet distance. He knew how much depended on its results, and waited in breathless suspense, while the King, with great severity, yet with the air of a father, reproached the Duke for consorting with men who were known to be hostile to him, and for taking counsel with those who must in the end prove his ruin. Finally he offered him a free pardon provided that he would in all things submit without reserve to the royal pleasure.

Monmouth seemed to waver, an impulse seized him to fling himself at his father's feet, and make a comfortable ending of his exile and disgrace, but a second

impulse restrained him, he swayed to and fro, not knowing what course to take. And thus in uncertainty the interview ended, Charles, however, showing him such marked affection on leaving that Halifax greatly hoped his mission would after all prove successful.

Making haste to follow up his advantage, he returned later in the evening, and after much persuasion induced Monmouth to write a penitent letter to the King. One by one he forced out the reluctant admissions, regret for all his past offences, a petition that he might not be put upon his trial or sent to prison, a request for advice as to how he might best appease the wrath of the Duke of York, and finally a politic sentence which cost Halifax at least half-an-hour's argument with the reluctant scribe—"I throw myself at the feet of your Majesty, to be disposed of as your Majesty shall direct for the remainder of my life."

Having extorted this much, Halifax was content, and went away wearied yet not ill-satisfied with his evening's work. He had not calculated, however, on the man with whom he had to deal, nor did he in the least understand the strange mixture of nobility and weakness, impulsiveness and generosity, love of peace and impatience of evil which characterised the young duke.

As he passed down Newgate Street, the sight of a private coach at the main entrance, and the somewhat unusual spectacle of a lady being escorted into the gaol, made him pause for an instant. He looked after the retreating forms, then he glanced at the livery of the serving-man, and at the device upon the coach door. Notwithstanding the uncertain light of his torch,

he saw enough to convince him that the arms emblazoned on the panel were the Denham arms.

"They go to bid farewell to that poor victim of Jeffreys," he said to himself, and with that he sighed and fell into a painful reverie.

In the meantime, Sir William led Mary through the dismal passages in the great prison. Their admittance at such an hour was a great privilege, but now that Hugo's sentence had been carried out, now that the work for which he had been needed had perforce been carried through without his aid, the prison authorities were quite willing to grant some slight indulgence to one whom they knew to have been grossly ill-treated. All was over now, the victim had but a few more hours to live—they were willing to gratify his dying wishes.

"He has been asking for you all the evening," said Sir William. "Your name is the only one that hath passed his lips. And perchance you with your woman's skill may be able to do more for his comfort, poor lad, than we rough men-folk."

This had passed in the coach, as they drove from Norfolk Street to the gaol.

"I am glad you summoned me, sir," said Mary, gratefully, and there was a tremor in her voice which did not escape her uncle's notice.

"My dear niece," he said, taking her hand in the darkness, "hath aught passed betwixt you and Hugo? Have there been love passages betwixt you, my dear?"

"Never, uncle," she said, resolutely; "but he hath ever counted me as his sister, so much so as to make

me the confidant of his troubles. For you must know that he loves a maiden whom I must not name to you. But methinks I have not broken trust by telling you thus much."

"I would he had loved thee," said Sir William. "An thou hadst been betrothed to him, it would have been less like to cause scandal that I bring thee to visit him thus. Art prepared for that, my love? Folks credit not such friendships as thine in these evil days."

The hot blood rushed to her cheeks and the tears to her eyes. She knew that her uncle spoke the truth; she knew, moreover, that Hugo had asked for her just because she was the one medium of communication between himself and Joyce. Well, at least she could be to him that medium. At least she could bring him a comfort which no one else could bring. Angrily and almost contemptuously she strangled the thoughts of self which had arisen, and turned instead to the two whom she had schooled herself always to think of together—Hugo and Joyce. For Joyce, whom she had never seen, had become to her a very real person; she had loved her when she had only guessed that Hugo loved her, she had sympathised with her through the long months of that sad autumn, and had gladly forwarded Hugo's letter to her on the previous day. She had indeed learnt to think so much of her that, as she walked along the dreary prison corridors, it was no thought of herself which filled her heart with sorrow and her eyes with tears; neither was it any thought of Hugo. It was the thought of the other who would so fain have been in her position, of the unknown Joyce

far away in the old Suffolk hall, who would not so much as know that her lover was dying.

They had mounted some tedious flights of stairs, and now the gaoler paused before a narrow door, and softly opened it. Mary glanced hastily round. It seemed to her a most wretched little room, almost full of people, but for Newgate it was princely accommodation. For Scroop had taken care that the prisoner should not be taken back to his old quarters in the Common-Debtors' Ward; but, determined that he should at least die in peace, had borne him to his old room, for which upon his entrance he had paid so heavy a fee. Bampfield and Griffith stood beside his bed, and, in curious contrast to the two aged ministers, Rupert Denham, in his usual many-coloured raiment, and the richly-dressed leech. At their approach, Rupert turned, and, drawing back from the bedside, made room for Mary.

Then for the first time she caught sight of Hugo — for the first time since that May morning when he had come to tell them about his visit to Penshurst, and to claim their pity for himself on account of that visit to Longbridge Hall which he had so greatly dreaded. She remembered how they had managed to cheer him, and had sent him off laughing. His face—young, fresh, and healthful—rose before her. Was it possible that this could be Hugo—this man with lines of care on his brow, with lines of pain round his mouth, with a face so white, so changed, so deathly? Ah! what had they been doing to him to change him thus?

A passion of love and pity seemed to fill her whole being, and to crowd out every other thought. She was vaguely conscious all the time that old Jeremiah sat at

the head of the bed holding his young master in his arms, but for the other spectators she had no thought as she knelt beside him, bent down close to him, and called him by name. There was no answer, however, and she heard a whisper from the leech which seemed to pierce her heart like a sword-thrust.

"Past speaking, I fear. Sinking fast."

"Hugo, Hugo!" she cried, in an agony, "I am come to you, Hugo! I have sent your letter to Joyce!"

His eyelids seemed to quiver a little, and Mary instinctively knew what spell had brought him back to life.

"I have sent your letter to Joyce," she repeated.

The great grey eyes were now open, not dreamily peaceful as of old, but bright with pain, and at the same time eagerly wistful.

"Have you no message to send to her?" asked Mary. "The poor child, you would not leave her with no comfort—no last word."

He seemed to make a great effort in obedience to her request.

"Tell her," he whispered, faintly, "that it was for her, and therefore sweet."

"What was sweet?"

"To die."

The words were more breathed than spoken.

"Nay," said Mary, "but you must live for her, not die, Hugo." She glanced quickly at the leech, who placed in her hands a cup containing some strong restorative. And Hugo, who had refused or had been unable to swallow it before, now obeyed mechanically, while Mary talked on soothingly as though he had been

a child. "You will take it for her sake, will you not, Hugo? You would not grieve her by dying, you know; you will struggle hard to live, just for her. She is so young—so young to be left to such sorrow. You will get better, and then you will write to her. Trust me, I will send your letters."

"I don't understand," he said, pitifully, but with more strength in his voice. "I can do naught for her here. 'Tis all over. Let me die."

"That will I not," she said, resolutely. "You cannot understand, Hugo, but you must trust me. Some more cordial. There! Now you must sleep. For her sake, you know, for her sake."

She kept passing her fingers rhythmically through his hair from front to back. She was kneeling upright now, that she might have more power; she did not understand why it was, but this apparently mechanical action seemed to make vast demands on her strength. No one interfered with her, they had all tried their best with the patient, and had failed; they watched with a sort of curiosity, glancing now at the pale, resolute, absorbed face of the girl, now at the calm face on the pillow. Presently they saw, to their surprise, that Hugo had fallen asleep like a child. His nurse rose then; she looked worn out and exhausted, and there were dark shadows beneath her eyes. She laid her hand on Rupert's arm.

"Take me home please, cousin, take me home," she said, with again that irrepressible quiver in her voice.

And Rupert silently obeyed.

The leech looked after her curiously as she left the

room. She had succeeded where he had failed. He knew well enough that the patient owed his life to her.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE SEVENTH OF DECEMBER.

There is no murder which history has recorded of Cæsar Borgia exceeds in violence, or in fraud, that by which Charles took away the life of the gallant and patriotic Sydney.

LORD JOHN RUSSELL.

IT was many days before Hugo was capable of thinking clearly. Life was a kind of vague pain; his shoulders were so cruelly torn and lacerated that the slightest movement, even the action of breathing, was torture, while the exposure to the raw cold of the November day had brought back his old enemy the ague. He was as ill as he well could be, but alive, and likely to live. Everyone dinned this continually in his ears, and he did not feel grateful to them, though doing his best to feel glad that they were glad.

Often as he lay there in his weakness, he would try to call up in vision that 21st of November. But he never could recall it clearly, for, happily for human beings, physical pain cannot be very vividly recalled, but is dimmed and blurred by the passage of time. He had only the vaguest recollections of great suffering, though one or two trivial incidents were indelibly stamped upon his brain. He remembered noticing a holly-tree in the Oxford Road laden with red berries; he remembered the pitying face of a child; he remembered how, just at the end of that awful journey, when Tyburn was

in sight, he had heard a robin singing among the bushes by the roadside. And most vividly he could recall the comforting presence of old Jeremiah. Thinking it all over one day, he began to wonder how Jerry had learnt of his fate; how he had persuaded Randolph to allow him to come to the prison. Had his brother some lingering love for him, after all? Had he perhaps sent the old serving-man, though he would not come himself? He turned round with almost the first voluntary question he had put since his illness. The old soldier sat beside him as usual, indeed he almost lived with him, being the last visitor to leave Newgate at night and the first to arrive in the morning.

"Did my brother send you?" he asked, faintly.

"No, dear lad," said Jeremiah, "he sent me not; I am no longer in his service."

It was a bitter disappointment. Hugo kept silence for some time. Then the consciousness of Jerry's devotion began to comfort him again, and, thinking of the old servant, he turned hastily with a second question.

"Why did you quit his service? Was it for me, Jerry, for me?"

"Ay, dear lad," said Jeremiah, quietly. "What else would you have? I did but stay with him till they would let me come to thee here. I will call no one master save thee."

"A sorry master," said Hugo, with the ghost of a smile flitting across his haggard face. "A master who will end his days in gaol, and who has no power of giving wages. An unprofitable service, Jerry. I am a bad investment."

Then seeing the doubtful, bewildered look on the

old man's face he changed his tone, and, taking the rough hand, clasped it fast in both of his. "God bless you for it, Jerry, God bless you!"

That was all that ever passed between them on the subject, neither of them being men of many words.

Mary and Sir William had visited him daily, but it was not until the afternoon, when he had had the above conversation with Jeremiah, that he took very much note of their presence or attempted to talk to them. He was now much more himself, and welcomed them with some show of eagerness. Then, when Sir William was engrossed in conversation with Bampfield, he for the first time asked Mary about his other letter.

"You have said naught of Colonel Sydney," he said, quietly. "You sent him my letter?"

"Yes," said Mary, "Ducasse gave it to him that very day."

"Do not fear to tell me the worst," said Hugo, gently. "The trial went against him, did it not?"

She signed an assent.

"The King told me his fate was sealed," said Hugo. "When is it to—to——" he broke off, unable to frame the words.

"That is not yet certain; no warrant has been issued as yet; and, Hugo, I hardly know whether I ought to say it, but we heard it rumoured that the King seemed to waver after receiving Colonel Sydney's account of the trial. They say too that the pardon of the Duke of Monmouth may have some bearing upon Colonel Sydney's case."

"What! the duke pardoned?" exclaimed Hugo.

"Ay, he was at Whitehall not many days since,"

said Mary. "And they say he hath made full confession and hath told the King all that he knew of the conspiracy. He saw the King and the Duke of York, and hath received his pardon under the great seal. Moreover, we heard it from one high in authority, whom, however, I must not name, that the King had given him six thousand pounds, and had taken him once more into favour."

"What does that bode?" said Hugo, musingly. "I should not have thought the duke would have turned informer."

"That is what no one will believe," replied Mary; "and they say that he goes about everywhere dropping hints that he said naught to the King which could criminate any of those brought up for trial. And this having reached the King's ears, he is very angry with him again, and they say he insists that the duke shall write and sign a statement confirming all that passed in the interview."

"You have brought me hope," said Hugo, gratefully; "you have made me better already."

"There is one thing more I must tell you," said Mary, with a happy light in her eyes. "That one whom I mentioned to you told us also that he believed your interview with the King had much to do with his hesitation about Colonel Sydney, that and your—your illness."

They were both of them young and hopeful; they thought that already the good would be brought out of the evil; they thought they should see of the travail of their souls, and be satisfied here and now. But the very next day there came a sharp reverse. Whigs and

Tories alike were startled and shocked when the warrant was issued, "contrary to all men's expectations," for the execution of Algernon Sydney. They hesitated at first to tell the ill news to Hugo, but at length Sir William bade his niece break the tidings to him as gently as might be. It was hard work, and yet she was glad that they had chosen her for the task.

It was a bitterly cold winter's morning, and she had brought with her to the prison all manner of wraps for the invalid from Lady Denham; she talked as long as she could about trivial matters, deferring the evil day. But such little expedients are of no use between friends. Hugo instantly perceived how matters were.

"You have something to tell me?" he said, quietly.

"We hoped too soon, Hugo," she replied, in a choked voice.

"The warrant is issued?"

"Yes."

"What day?"

"The seventh of December."

"Friday," said Hugo, musingly. "A fit day for one who dies for the people." Then, shuddering, and with a look of horror in his eyes, "It will not be the worst way, will it?"

"No, no," she replied, quickly. "They will spare him that. He will be beheaded."

"O God!" he cried, "if I could but be with him! 'Tis hard, 'tis hard, that the wretchedest beggar in London may look his last on him while I lie here in gaol!"

He turned faint, and Mary had as much as she could do to recover him, Bampfield assisting her, and speaking kindly words, which comforted her afterwards

more than at the time. Presently, when Hugo was himself again, he turned to her with another question.

"What of the Duke of Monmouth?"

"We have heard from the same source that he did write the letter which the King demanded, but wrote it evasively; that the King demanded a plain and unmistakeable statement, and that, after great hesitation, he at length wrote and signed it, but had no sooner done so than he hurried to Whitehall, overwhelmed with shame and horror at what he had done, and pleaded passionately with the King to restore him the paper. The King, after long expostulation, induced him to sleep upon the matter, but the next morning the duke returned with his request, and the King restored the paper to him, but by the Lord Chamberlain sent him word that he was never again to come into the royal presence. They say, the duke being much grieved at his father's severity, his wife persuaded him again to sign a paper with the information which the King desired, but His Majesty at once refused to entertain the proposal, and it is thought that he will persevere in his intention of never again seeing the duke."

"And it was after this that the warrant was issued?" asked Hugo.

"Yes; the King, being wrath at hearing how Monmouth's friends were everywhere saying how he had not criminated anyone by his statement, said that, did he pardon Colonel Sydney, he should be countenancing these said reports. Ducasse was at our house this morning."

"Ah!"—Hugo's face lighted up—"what said he of his master?"

"That he was busy writing a short account of his life, and that he asked often after you, and would write to you—that he rejoiced to hear that you were likely to live."

"And how took he the ill news?"

"Ducasse was with him when the sheriffs arrived at the Tower. He said his master was surprised, having thought, like everyone else, that it was impossible the King would allow such a mockery of a trial to pass. But when they handed him the paper, he read it through with an unmoved face, for all the world as though it had been a playbill, with details of some mock tragedy. And when he had ended he turned to the sheriffs, and said to them that he would not say one word to them on his own behalf, seeing that he was ready to die, and that the world was naught to him; but very sternly he called to their remembrance how grievously they had sinned against the people of this land in packing a jury and in causing their office to be evil spoken of by acting thus with injustice and servility."

"That was like him," said Hugo, in a low voice. "It was ever the 'People' with him—'self' never."

"And Ducasse says," continued Mary, "that the sheriffs looked blank enough as though they were pricked at heart, and one of them fairly burst into tears."

Shortly after Sir William came to fetch his niece home, and seeing that Hugo had talked already more than he ought to have done, and was likely to talk so

long as she remained, she thought it best to leave the gaol as soon as might be.

"Uncle," she said, as they drove back to Norfolk Street, "shall you go to be present at Colonel Sydney's death?"

"No, my love," said Sir William, with a shudder. "I am over old for such horrors. My God! How comes His Majesty to permit such an injustice!" And Sir William, staunch Tory as he was, broke into a passionate denunciation of the wrong that had been wrought.

Arrived at the house, Mary hastily sought her cousin.

"Rupert," she said, "are you going to Tower Hill next Friday?"

"Not I," he replied, with an oath, and an irrepressible shudder. "I have no taste for death-scenes, least of all for public ones."

She said no more, but shut herself into the parlour and tried to think out the pros and cons of the idea that had come to her.

Hugo longed to be present at the last with his friend and teacher, but lay helpless in gaol. He would wish to hear from a faithful eye-witness all that passed. Yet more, he ought to be told carefully, lovingly, not coarsely and brutally by some prison official or some chance visitor. Her uncle would not go, her cousin would not go—should she—ah! horrible idea! could she possibly go herself? The mere thought sickened her. And yet was she to think of her own feelings where Hugo was concerned? Was she to be conquered by the mere horror of a frightful sight, or dismayed by the thought that people might blame her, mistaking her motive? She was not much in the

habit of consulting other people, being of an independent nature, and having always been obliged to think for herself, since lady Denham was a semi-invalid, Sir William absorbed in scientific matters, and Rupert the last person in the world to give help or advice in any difficulty. So, after much inward debate, she rang the bell and summoned old Thomas the butler.

"Thomas," she said, bidding him close the door behind him, "did you not tell me you had a kinswoman kept a house on Tower Hill?"

"Ay, Mistress Mary. 'Tis my cousin by marriage, and a very worthy dame too, her husband is a vintner in a small way."

"Ask her, then, if you may bring me to her house on Friday morning," said Mary. "Tell her that I have special reasons for desiring to see Mr. Sydney once more as he passes to his death."

The old servant seemed about to make some remonstrance, but on second thoughts he checked himself, and, without any comment, promised to do as his young mistress wished. The deed thus done, the step irrevocably taken, poor Mary underwent a sharp reaction, and awaited the day with dread and shrinking unspeakable.

It came at length—a fresh, bright December day. Very early—almost as soon as it was light—Mary got into a sedan-chair, and with Thomas in attendance they made their way through the streets, having agreed that it was best to reach their destination before the crowd of spectators should have assembled; indeed, when they reached Tower Hill, there was scarcely a soul about, only a few street boys gaping up with awestruck faces

at the scaffold which some workmen were draping with black cloth. Thomas led the way into a respectable-looking house, where a bustling housewife with a round, rosy face came out to receive them, curtseying low, and smiling with a bland hospitality which seemed out of keeping with the day.

"'Tis the best house on all Tower Hill for the sight," she said, cheerfully, smoothing her apron as she spoke. "Many's the party that come to me on execution days, and many is the golden guinea that my windows have gained me. Not but what I'm proud to do it for Sir William Denham's family just out of respect, and taking no account of payment."

"No, that must not be," said Mary, pressing a gold coin into the good woman's hand. "But yet for the love you bear my uncle's family I will ask you as a favour, let no one else come into the room whence I am to look forth."

The buxom housewife smiled and promised, conducting the visitor as she spoke to a little disused room full of apples stored on long wooden shelves round the walls.

"This is a poor place, Madam, but I assure you the best view of the scaffold. You'll hear every word that passes from here!" and with that the worthy dame threw open the window and was proceeding to tell Mary of the executions she had witnessed from this particular spot, when a knock below made her hastily withdraw.

"More spectators, I warrant," she remarked with satisfaction. "But I will mind and not let them disturb you, mistress."

Mary thanked her, but took the precaution of bolt-

ing the door as soon as she was out of hearing. Then she knelt down and tried to prepare for the morning that awaited her. After a while, when she had gained the mastery of herself and was quite calm and composed, she went to the window and looked forth. By this time an immense crowd had gathered in the open space around the scaffold; she could hear the sound of many voices rising up, a meaningless and ceaseless roar which seemed to throb against her ears with every now and then more emphatic pulsations.

Gradually the throng grew thicker and denser, and every window, and even the roofs and chimneys of the houses were crammed with eager on-lookers. And now the church clocks struck ten, and Mary observed a sort of movement in the huge swaying mass of heads below; she glanced at the scaffold, and saw that the executioner had just arrived, and stood confronting the people with his black half-mask and the axe grasped in his right hand. She heard some one below say the sheriffs had gone to the Tower, and that "it" would be soon. Then came a waiting which, though in reality short, seemed like an eternity. Mary knelt at the window, her elbows on the sill, her hands tightly clasped, her eyes fixed on the most distant point of the narrow gangway, the point where she knew that ere long Sydney would appear. At length came a second movement of the heads below, a vibration seemed to thrill through the dense crowd, the word was passed from one to another that the prisoner was coming. Mary's breath came fast, and her heart throbbed painfully, as the familiar figure turned the corner, and advanced along the narrow pathway between the people.

He had walked on foot from the Tower, the sheriffs on either side of him, while close to him was his faithful valet Ducasse, and an old family servant of whom he was fond. They were the sole friends for whose presence he had petitioned, nor would he have priest or minister to attend him in his last moments. Had it not been for the grave sheriffs and the sorrowing servants, Mary could have fancied that he was but taking an ordinary walk, so tranquil and unmoved was his face, so natural his mien. Many a time she had seen him enter her uncle's house with a look of care, and with the gait of an elderly man; to-day he looked young and alert, full of life and yet indifferent to death, the centre and chief attraction of that huge assembly, but apparently the least concerned individual in the throng.

Never once did he speak to his companions—he had ceased to think of individuals at all, he had ceased even to think of himself, he thought of God—of God and the people. That vast crowd which had gathered together to gaze at his last sufferings did not in the least disturb his peace. The publicity could no longer gall him, since the thought of his own individuality had been lost and merged in something higher. Steadily, briskly, he walked on until he reached the scaffold—the dreary-looking scaffold with its mournful hangings, its floor and staircase covered with black. As his foot touched the first step he paused, his other foot resting for the last time on the fair, beautiful earth which he was leaving for ever. The thought of self returned, he glanced up the narrow black stairs, right up to the clear blue December sky.

The People—and Death! Ay, he, Algernon Sydney—he, spite of his sins and shortcomings and manifold failures, was to die for them—for them and their liberties. It was well. He raised his eyes to heaven in silent thanksgiving. Then with his usual calm dignity, his usual slightly austere manner, he quietly walked up the stairway, glanced with stoical indifference at the black coffin, and, making his way to the block, stood silently watching the people below.

There was a breathless silence—a silence which might be felt. Was he about to address the assembly? No, that could hardly be, for he raised his voice scarcely above its ordinary tone. So clear and distinct were his refined accents, however, that every word reached Mary Denham.

"I have made my peace with God, and have nothing to say to men; but here is a paper of what I have to say."

With this he handed a packet to the sheriff, who asked whether he would not read it to the crowd or have it read. But Sydney, weakened by long imprisonment, and feeling the keen December air after such close confinement, declined.

"No," he replied. "But if you will not take it, I will tear it."

"Is the paper written in your handwriting?" asked the sheriff.

"Yes," replied Sydney.

After that the sheriff consented to take the paper, and Sydney, turning to Ducasse, placed in his hand anothe paper and bade him farewell, kindly, but with no effusion. The valet had not been so long in the

Republican's service without learning to control his emotional French nature. Lovingly but silently he received his master's hat, coat, and doublet, nor allowed the tears to start to his eyes until Sydney had turned from him to the executioner.

"I am ready to die, I will give you no further trouble," he said, and, holding out his hand, proffered the executioner three guineas, it being the custom in those days that people should pay for the trouble they gave in having their heads cut off. The executioner chinked the gold in his hand with a discontented air.

"I looked for more than this from your honour; an earl's son might have come down with more than a paltry three guineas."

A slightly sarcastic expression stole over Sydney's face, but he turned to his valet.

"Joseph, my friend, give the fellow another guinea or two," he said.

Then, while Ducasse produced the money and handed it to the headsman, Sydney knelt down and said a prayer "as short as a grace." When he uncovered his face Mary noticed that it bore a calm, happy smile, and, without one other word, he laid his head on the block and awaited the end.

The executioner drew near with raised axe.

"Are you ready, sir?" he cried. "Shall you rise again?"

And the serene smile grew brighter as, with firm voice, Sydney replied, "Not till the general Resurrection. Strike on!"

CHAPTER XIV.

"LOVE IS LORD OF ALL."

Passion grounded upon confession of excellence outlives hope .... For that same love for which God created and beautified the world, is the only means for us to return unto Him who is the fountain of our being; and through the imperfections of our natures being not able to see or comprehend His greatness and goodness, otherwise than by His works, must make us from visible things to raise our thoughts up to Him.

ALGERNON SYDNEY.

GRIFFITH had been moved to write a sermon that morning, and sat at the further end of the room with his ink-horn and papers; Bampfield read to himself, breaking off occasionally to stir the soup which was simmering over the fire, and Hugo, after a sleepless night, lay idly watching the two old men, though his thoughts were far away. Ah, had he but been free he might have been with his friend to the last, might have walked with him from his prison, might have stood beside him on the scaffold! He could never again serve him—nay, he had scarcely served him at all, for those weary months in the prison had been wasted so far as he was concerned, and now hope was over, injustice had triumphed, and his master was to be put to death —to be judicially murdered!

He turned his face from the light in silent anguish, in which he was, nevertheless, conscious of a certain

relief in the quiet of the cell, a certain gratitude to his two companions for leaving him alone. But all at once the quiet was broken and his sorrow rudely invaded. An ill-conditioned prisoner named Matthew, whose duty it was to go round the prison distributing the daily dole of bread which was allowed to certain classes of prisoners, flung open the door, and, having set down his loaf on the wooden bench which served for table, crossed over to Hugo's bed.

"Well," he exclaimed, with a horrible grin, as he rubbed his grimy hands, "Mr. Sydney's d——d head is off."

Bampfield, hastily interposing, tried in vain to check the man, but he went on unheeding.

"Off at one blow, they say, except that the headsman had to finish off just a trifle of skin with his knife."

At this, however, even Griffith was roused, and, stepping quickly forward, he took the fellow by the shoulders and turned him out of the cell.

"Take thy vain prating hence!" he said, with righteous indignation; then with the anxiety of a doctor, turned to see how it fared with his patient.

He had long ago ceased to judge Hugo harshly; spite of himself, he had been won, and was now fain to admit that even a man who was familiar with Whitehall, a man who wore lace cravats and gay colours, might, after all, be not wholly a reprobate. But neither Dr. Griffith, with his good intentions, nor Francis Bampfield, with his saintly love and sympathy, could do much for their fellow-prisoner now. The horrible words had all too vividly called up before him the

ghastly spectacle, had roused all those terrible thoughts of death which are most repugnant to human nature. Death had never before touched him nearly; he had almost died himself, it is true, but had been so worn out with pain of mind and body that he had hailed death as a deliverer. He could not do this in the case of his friend. Death was to him only the destroyer, the cruel, merciless, irresistible destroyer. The brutal words had quenched all higher thoughts, had brought before him only the material view, with its blood, and sickening details. He could only think of the eyes that had smiled on him—thus; the lips that had kissed him—thus; the hand that had clasped his—thus. He broke into passionate weeping, into an agony of sobbing, most dangerous in his present state, as both the watchers knew, yet neither the one nor the other could say one word to check him.

At length, to their inexpressible relief, the door was unlocked, and Scroop admitted Sir William Denham and Mary. Instinctively the three men drew together, talking in low voices of the event of the day, and leaving to the woman the difficult—the almost impossible—task which had baffled them.

She sat down beside the bed, making him aware of her presence, but without speaking. Then after a while, when she thought that, from sheer exhaustion, his sobs were less violent, and that he might listen to her voice, she said, quietly and distinctly,

"It was not like Death, Hugo, it was like a triumph."

With a strong effort he controlled himself, and, still with averted face, he asked,

"Who told you of it?"

"I was there," she answered, quietly; "there all the time."

"You were there!" he exclaimed, turning towards her, and, in his astonishment, forgetting for the moment all else.

Was he shocked? Mary wondered. Did he think she had done an unwomanly thing! Did he shrink from a girl who could voluntarily go to see an execution? A faint colour came into her face, her eyes filled. She said falteringly, and as if in excuse, words which she had never meant to say.

"It was for you I went."

He caught her hand in his and pressed it to his lips. But he did not thank her; she was glad that he did not in words.

"Tell me," he said, after a silence—"tell me all."

"There can have been very little pain," she said, allowing Hugo still to hold her hand in his. "It was all over so quickly, and even the smile on his face was there afterwards. There was such a hush all through the crowd, and not one soul stirred; all the folk standing by weeping quietly, while Ducasse and the other servant laid his body reverently in the coffin, and then bore it down to a coach which was in waiting to take it to Penshurst. He wished much to be buried in Penshurst, they say; for he loved the place only the more that he had been so long exiled from it. But, Hugo, I cannot think of him as lying there dead. I think of him as he looked just as he ascended the scaffold. When he first came in sight, looking so indifferent, so composed, I thought how like he must be to his favourite hero, Marcus Brutus. But just as he mounted the stairs he paused and looked up with a

look on his face that I can never describe to you—a look I never saw on mortal face before, and it made me understand the words we sing in church,—

'The noble army of martyrs praise Thee.' "

She paused, thinking that the rest had perhaps better wait for some other time. Hugo obediently took the wine which she held to his lips, but looked up presently wih an eager entreaty.

"Talk on," he said, pleadingly. "Your voice comforts me."

"Ducasse caught sight of me afterwards," said Mary, yielding to his entreaty. "And he came and spoke to me, poor fellow. Almost the last thing I had seen Colonel Sydney do before he laid aside his hat and doublet was to place a paper in his man's hand and speak a few words to him, which I could not hear. And that paper, Hugo, was for you—Ducasse gave it me."

She took from her pocket a letter, directed to Hugo in Sydney's large, bold handwriting. Hugo eagerly unfolded it, but the moment he tried to read his head swam, and he was forced to ask Mary to read it to him. The letter ran as follows:—

"My dear Friend,

"I had well-nigh said my son, seeing that of late you have been to me as son to father. I have but a short time left to me in this world, and have many matters to order and arrange, but you shall stand second to none, and I will write you while yet time remains to me. And first, to thank you for your loving silence, for your firm constancy. I rejoice that your

life is like to be spared, and that I can hope and pray —as I do most fervently—that you may be spared to work for the old cause when I am no more. You will have heard of my trial ere this. The Lord Chief Justice is said to have bragged unto the King that no man in his place had ever rendered unto any King of England such services as he had done in procuring my death. In truth, he over-ruled eight or ten very important points of law, and decided them without hearing, whereby the law itself was made a snare which no man could avoid, nor have any security for his life or fortune, if one vile wretch could be found to swear against him such circumstances as he required. God only knows what will be the issue of the like practice in these our days. Perhaps He will in mercy speedily visit His afflicted people. I die in the faith that He will do it, though I know not the time or ways.

"I believe that the people of God in England have, in these late years, generally grown faint. Some, through fear, have deflected from the integrity of their principles, some have too deeply plunged themselves in worldly cares, and, so they might enjoy their trades and wealth, have less regarded the treasure that is laid up in heaven. But I think there are very many who have kept their garments unspotted; and I hope that God will deliver them and the nation for their sakes. God will not suffer this land, where the Gospel hath of late flourished more than in any part of the world, to become a slave of the world; He will not suffer it to be made a land of graven images. He will stir up witnesses of the Truth, and, in His own time, spirit His people to stand up for His cause, and deliver them. I lived in this

belief, and am now about to die in it. I know that my Redeemer lives; and, as He hath in a great measure upheld me in the day of my calamity, hope that He will still uphold me by His Spirit in this last moment, and give me grace to glorify Him in my death.

"For in truth, Hugo, I hold it a great honour that God hath permitted me to be singled out as a witness of His truth, and even by the confession of my opposers for that good old cause in which I was from my youth engaged, and for which God hath often and wonderfully declared Himself.

"Farewell, dear lad; keep a brave heart in your prison, make the spirit triumph over the flesh, and may God grant you at length your liberty, that you may the better serve Him. Whatever betide—whether in prison or at large—keep the words of our motto graven on your heart, 'Sanctus amor patriæ dat animum.'

"Your most faithful friend,

"AL. SYDNEY."

When the letter was ended Mary once more told him everything that had passed that morning, describing all simply and truthfully, so that he knew she kept nothing back from him, and was satisfied. The violence of his grief was over; he was quite calm now, only unspeakably weary and sad.

"After all," he said, just before Mary left him, "I, too, may follow ere long. The scaffold is not the only way to death."

"You forget," she said, in a low voice—"you forget one who needs you, one who wearies for your coming. Do not speak of dying; you must live for Joyce."

"You do not understand," he said. "That is all over. I have bid her to be free and to think of me no more. What right have I to blight her life—I, who must live for ever in this hellish Newgate!"

She would have replied, but at that moment Sir William drew near.

"My dear," he said in his kindly voice, "my dear, I do not wish to rob Hugo of his nurse, but you look to me over-wrought and weary; I think you had better come home."

Hugo looked up; even his troubles had not made him very observant; now, for the first time, he looked searchingly in Mary's face. Her brilliant colour had faded, there were dark shadows below her eyes, effort was written upon her once serene brow, and exhaustion upon her pale lips. As Sir William spoke her head drooped a little, but she made no remonstrance.

"God bless you for what you have done!" cried Hugo, and again he caught her hand in his; then, turning to Sir William, "She is the best of comforters—the best!"

Sir William was quite right. Mary was both over-wrought and exhausted. She was glad to go straight to bed on reaching home, and to escape any further conversation about Sydney's death or Hugo's convalescence. But darkness and solitude brought her no rest, but instead the most horrible temptation of her whole life. Hugo no longer considered himself betrothed to Joyce Wharncliffe; he had told her so with his own lips—had told her that he would on no account hold Joyce to a promise which would blight her life. And then, just after that, he had held her hand in his with

a touch which yet lingered there, and had called her the best of comforters. Might she not win his love? It would not blight her life to love him, though he were imprisoned all his days; rather to be loved by him, and confessedly to love him, would be heaven itself.

And then her uncle's words returned to her—the words which had caused her such burning blushes as they drove that first night to the prison—"I would thou hadst been betrothed to him, then there could have been no handle for scandal-mongers in this visit." She wished he had never spoken those words, wished that they had not called up for her a double vision of sweet, sheltered, protected peace, and of solitary, hard exposure to all the bitter blasts which in this evil world were like to blow on her. And to love him in his dreary imprisonment, to love him even without any hope but that of bringing a ray of comfort to him in that wretched cell, what more could heart of woman crave?

No one who truly loved him could think otherwise. What! were mere prison walls to blight love? A fig for such love as that! True love would scorn so trumpery a separation, would gladly wait through years upon years with no other privilege than that of loving and being loved.

"And thus would Joyce speak," said a voice in her heart.

That voice made her shudder, it was the conscience or consciousness of right once more claiming its dominion over her; she burst into an agony of tears passionately sobbing in the darkness words which until now had never escaped her lips,—"I love him! I love him! My God, I love him!"

The reaction from the horrors of the morning, the exhaustion which naturally followed such a strain, the recollection of Hugo's words, the mingled weariness and excitement, all were against her. Yet because her love was pure, because her love was true she was saved. She did in very truth love Hugo, therefore the thought of his happiness was ever paramount, her own altogether secondary. He loved Joyce Wharncliffe, and Joyce loved him—then she would move heaven and earth to end their sorrow and separation, she would keep Hugo from sinking into that dreary acquiescence with a cruel fate, an acquiescence to which his nature would inevitably incline. Oh, yes! she would serve them—would serve them. And with that her tears flowed more gently—she even smiled through them, and her old visions of Joyce came back to her, and she chid herself for having allowed them to fade.

The next day things favoured her plans. Griffith went out to walk in the paved passage to which they were allowed access, and Francis Bampfield, who for some time past had been in failing health, lay asleep on his bed, leaving her to what was practically a *tête-à-tête* with Hugo.

"Will you give me leave to speak to you plainly, Hugo?" she asked; "as old friend, sister, mentor?"

He looked up languidly. She resumed,

"Had I known what your letter to Mistress Wharncliffe contained I think I should have refused to give it to the post."

"Do not speak of it," he said, turning away with a gesture of pain. "'Twas hard enough to do, but 'tis

done now. Did I not tell you yesternight that I would suffer anything rather than blight her life?"

"That is how you menfolk talk," said Mary, quickly. "But believe me, Hugo, you are mistaken. Lives are not so easily blighted. Trust me, we women are stronger than you think for, ay, and braver and more patient. Mistress Wharncliffe loves you. Do you believe that any woman who truly loves a man would not rather be a maid all her life for love of him, than be what you call free? Free! in good sooth I know not what you mean by free! Would you so wrong her as to think that, while you for her father's sake lie here in gaol she would go wed some other? You wrong our sex an you can dream of such a thing."

Hugo was silent; this was altogether a new view of the case, a view which certainly would never have occurred to him. Yet it had a sound of truth in it. But again the thought of the years of suspense and waiting and sorrow for Joyce rose before him. He turned away with a groan.

"I would I had never told her of my love."

Mary was silent for a minute. When she could trust herself to speak she said, in a low voice,

"I don't know Mistress Wharncliffe, yet I think that she would never agree to such a sentence as that. Have you not given her the right openly, confessedly, to love you? Have you not given her the best gift a man can give? And as the thought of her love brings comfort to you in this gruesome gaol, so doth your love bring comfort to her at Mondisfield."

"I do not see it," he groaned, "I can do naught

for her, naught! My love comfort her, forsooth! How should it comfort her?"

Her eyes swam with tears which would no longer be restrained. Hastily rising, she made a pretence of stirring the sea-coal fire.

"You foolish lad!" she exclaimed, taking good care not to turn her face towards him as she spoke, "you foolish lad! Why, to know that she has your love will be comfort enow. To know that you live for her, keep brave and patient for her, to know that you think of her, dream of her, pray for her, hope for her. To know that by your silence you protect her, by your noble suffering shield her, by your heart's deep love delight to do all this—what more could woman desire? Is not that comfort? Would barren, painless peace without you have been better?"

He was silent. Mary returned to her former place.

"There, you gave me leave to play the scold," she said, smiling. "And now I will forbear; nay, I will confess what I know to be the truth, that where you have one fault, I have a hundred."

"One!" said Hugo, with a look of amusement. "Which?"

"You acquiesce too readily in suffering, you patiently endure when you ought to resist, you are resigned where you ought to hope against hope. Make me a present of your quiet resignation, Hugo; for, in truth, I could very well do with it. Call back the goddess of Hope, and bid her drive away your despondency, and throw her rainbow arch over the future you paint so black."

"For what would you have me hope?"

"For freedom—for Joyce!"

"I have no reasonable ground to look for aught but life-long imprisonment."

"Perhaps not. I am only a woman and ignorant. But look you, kings have been known to relent. Moreover, prisoners have often been pardoned by succeeding monarchs, and the King and the Duke of York are both of them past middle-age, while you are but twenty. Also,"—she lowered her voice to a whisper—"prisoners sometimes escape. There, I am weary; scolding is hard work. And, since Thomas is waiting for me, I will go home. Farewell. Think of what I have said."

He did think. What else was there left for him to do? He escaped from bodily and mental pain, and once more allowed tender thoughts of the past, eager hopes for the future to cheer his present dreariness. His happy, free life returned to him once more—he dared to live through that magic time, the last days of his youth, as it had proved, from the October when he had first seen Joyce to the midsummer when all had been ended in Newgate. Those golden months when he had hoped with a delicious, vague hope, had feared with a half-hopeful, half-happy fear. Once more he talked with the little Duchess of Grafton, once more he half-confessed to Mary his hopes and fears with regard to Joyce, once more he roamed through the stately old rooms of Penshurst, ever in company with his master and friend, once more he was at Mondisfield telling Joyce of his love in the north parlour. And it was no longer all pain that looking back, for Mary's words had done their work.

For her there had been tears and grief, but all the

time the sun of love shining; and thus she had brought hope's rainbow into the life of another.

CHAPTER XV.

THE DUCHESS OF GRAFTON.

In all thy need be thou possest
Still with a well-prepared breast;
Nor let the shackles make thee sad;
Thou canst but have what others had.
And this for comfort thou must know:
Times that are ill won't still be so;
Clouds will not ever pour down rain,
A sullen day will clear again;
First peals of thunder we must hear,
Then lutes and harps shall strike the ear.

HERRICK.

THAT afternoon Mary went to visit the little duchess, who, married in her babyhood, was now, at the age of sixteen, a mother. The grand bed-chamber, with its magnificent fittings and furnishings, was a strange contrast to the Newgate cell where lay her other friend, and the contrast struck Mary somewhat painfully as she was ushered in by a pompous old nurse; but, when the silken bed-curtains were drawn back, she forgot the contrast in the pleasure of once more seeing her friend.

The little Duchess of Grafton looked sweeter than ever in her lying-in cap and dainty, lace-trimmed robe; she was pale as a lily, but seemed bright and well, and with already the soft tender light of maternity in her eyes. The tiny, red-faced baby was nestled close to

her; she kept stroking his dark, downy head as she talked.

"I have been looking for you this age, Mary!" she exclaimed. "Do you know that I began to receive visitors on the twenty-sixth of last month? And you, my closest friend, put me off with the 8th of December."

"I would have come," said Mary, "but indeed my aunt advised not, and said you would be overdone with seeing so many. And, moreover, we have had much to occupy us of late. Mr. Evelyn told me he had seen you and the babe. What a bonny wee man he is."

"Is he not?" said the little mother, raising herself on her elbow that she might better display her first-born. "Yes, Mr. Evelyn saw him the first of all, and is so much in love that he is coming again to-day. I hear he has taken a house in London for the winter. That is good hearing."

"Yes, he has taken a house in Villiers Street, and so is a near neighbour. He is come chiefly the better to educate his daughters. Mr. Evelyn thinks much of education."

"Ay," said the little duchess, laughing; "he and I have already discussed my babe's future. Have we not, my bonny Charlie?"

"Is he to be Charles?"

"After his grandfather. But you are not to be like His Majesty, for all that, my son. No, no, we know better, you and I. There! take him, Mary, before I talk any more treason to him. You cannot see him under this dark canopy."

Mary sat nursing the babe, and ere long in came

the old nurse with the caudle-cup and the cake-basket.

"There, now you must do your duty," said the little duchess, laughing. "For my part, I affect the cake, but not the caudle; and that tyrant nurse will never let me have all I should like. Your mother is a *gourmande*, my wee Charlie, an outrageous *gourmande*. She must mend her ways ere you come to years of discretion."

"The caudle is good for your grace," said the old nurse, sententiously. "Good wine, good bread, good spices and sugar will hearten up your grace, and bring the colour back to your cheeks. But cakes, there be naught that is wholesome in cakes."

"Good flour, good spices and sugar," retorted the duchess, laughing. "But there, 'tis ever the same, is it not, Mary? What we best like that is not for our good; what we shrink from that is ever the one thing needful. Who would have thought so much philosophy was to be found in my old nurse, with her cakes and caudle! And now," said the duchess, growing grave once more, as the nurse withdrew from the apartment, "And now, Mary, tell me of all that hath happened. Do not fear. The rumour of all the horrors hath penetrated even this quiet room. Oh, never think that I have forgot you all, that I have been selfish and heedless in this luxury of illness. I have prayed for you, and for them; only for the sake of my babe, I dared not hear too much, dared not ask too many questions."

"Dear, do not ask them now," said Mary, quietly. "Of what avail is it that you should know what could only make you sorrowful?"

"They told me, or rather I heard of Colonel Syd-

ney's death. I knew it was to be the seventh. Some visitor mentioned it to my father, forgetting perchance that I lay behind these curtains, and might possibly care that a brave man was to be done to death. Yet I am glad too that I knew; for, as the hour drew near, I lay here and prayed for him. Tell me, how died he?"

"Like one of the noble army of martyrs," said Mary.

"And Hugo Wharncliffe yet lives?"

"He yet lives, and is like to live."

"Oh, it is terrible to me to think of him," said the little duchess, keeping back her tears with difficulty. "It seems to me worse than Colonel Sydney's case, for he at least is at rest, and his pain must have been sharp and short, but the other—such a long torture; and to be made thus a public spectacle! When I think of him as he was at Whitehall but a few months since —when I remember him at the Gray's Inn masque so bravely clad, so happy, I could weep my heart out."

"They say the King would fain have saved him," said Mary. "Do you think he would ever be induced to set him at liberty?"

"I cannot tell, he changes so; he is not what he once was, kind and gracious, now he is ofttimes heavy and sullen, no one knows how to take him."

"They say he is ill, that this humour in his leg affects him more than was at first thought for. But you, he is fond of you, he might hearken to you."

"What! you think I might plead for Mr. Wharncliffe? I would do so most gladly. Oh! do you really think he would hearken to me? Perhaps now—now that I have brought him a grandson and a namesake. Oh, little son! we will put it all upon you! You shall

rescue Mr. Wharncliffe from Newgate! You shall be a deliverer while yet in swaddling-clothes. And here in good time comes Mr. Evelyn. We will consult with him."

There entered an elderly man, quietly but richly dressed in dark purple; his face was delightful, the brow high and intellectual, the features refined, the expression thoughtful but not abstracted, the eyes kind and gentle, yet keenly observant. The little duchess had chosen her adviser well. Mr. Evelyn was before all things a man to be consulted. He thought well of their plan, and spoke hopefully of Hugo's release.

"They tell me young Mr. Wharncliffe was intimate with Colonel Sydney, and that this had much to do with the severity of his sentence."

"Yes," said Mary. "He knew Mr. Sydney well, and reverenced him greatly. He is half heart-broken now, for, like all the rest of the world the sentence was a surprise to him."

"Sir George Jeffreys hath much to answer for," said Mr. Evelyn, gravely. "It was an ill day for England when he was promoted. But a day or two since I met with him at a wedding—the wedding of jolly Mrs. Castle, of whom no doubt you have heard."

"What, the lady that hath had five husbands? Was Sir George Jeffreys there?"

"Ay, he was there, and the Lord Mayor and the sheriff too, besides many aldermen and persons of quality. Jeffreys danced with the bride and spent the night till eleven of the clock drinking healths, taking tobacco, and talking, to my mind, much beneath the

gravity of a judge, who but a day or two before condemned Mr. Algernon Sydney."

Mary treasured this up to tell Hugo, who, in his bitterness of soul, was beginning to think that justice and mercy were qualities which existed in no other Tory save Sir William Denham. Mr. Evelyn was no partisan, he was too broad-minded, too gentle for that, but he was emphatically a Tory, refined, cultured, scientific, and, in so far as science went, progressive; but in political matters he had always been, and always would be, opposed to all change.

"You think he was unjustly condemned?" asked the little duchess, wistfully.

"Most assuredly," said Mr. Evelyn. "For he was condemned on the single witness of that monster of a man, Lord Howard of Escrick, and some sheets of paper taken in Mr. Sydney's study, pretended to be written by him but not fully proved, nor the time when, but appearing to have been written before his Majesty's restoration, and thus pardoned by the Act of Oblivion."

"I suppose everyone knows that Mr. Sydney was averse to government by a king," said Mary, wishing to elicit more from Mr. Evelyn.

"Quite true, and he had been an inveterate enemy to our blessed martyr; nathless, he had hard measure. Sydney was a man of great courage, great sense, great parts. He showed that both at his trial and his death. Methought there was something very fine in the way he told the people he came not there to talk but to die. However, we must not discourse of executions in this room, 'tis not fitting. Train up your son to be loyal to his sovereign, my dear little friend, and pray God

to keep him from being involved in wild schemes for reform."

"I am scheming already to make him a reformer or rather a deliverer," said the duchess, laughing. "You are to fascinate his Majesty at your christening, my son, and then I will plead with him for young Mr. Wharncliffe."

But alas, the pleading was of no avail. The little duchess did her best, but she failed completely. The King protested that he had done all he could for Mr. Hugo Wharncliffe, that he had obstinately rejected all offers of help, and that now he must be left to his fate. It would be impossible for the King to pardon him after certain words that had passed between them at their last interview.

"Would you have me deal more leniently with him than with my son?" he asked, his brow darkening. "No, no, my love, I am sorry to refuse you aught on this gala day, but recall to mind the French proverb *Comme on fait son lit on se couche.* I offered Hugo Wharncliffe a post at Whitehall, he chose to stay in Newgate. What would you then? Am I to blame?"

So Hugo stayed in Newgate, and, thanks to the care and solicitude of the Denhams, slowly recovered his health and spirits. He was after all young and full of life; even the cruel cold which now set in did not retard his convalescence—he suffered severely from it, but it did him little harm. With Francis Bampfield it was otherwise. As the younger man grew stronger, the elder grew weaker. It was quite right, he said, quite natural; he had fought a good fight, and had well-nigh finished his course.

Rupert Denham had felt himself to be out of place during Hugo's illness, and after that first night had not returned to Newgate, but had left his friend to the care of Sir William, Mary, and old Jeremiah. Illness and sorrow were so foreign to his nature that perhaps he did well to keep aloof; but when Hugo recovered he made a point of going often to the prison and doing his best to enliven him. His first visit was in January, and Scroop, always pleased to usher in visitors to see the one prisoner whose welfare he had at heart, grinned broadly as he showed into the dreary-looking cell this incongruous gallant in his feathers and furbelows. Griffith was aghast at his swaggering gait and jovial, hearty manner.

He embraced his friend with much affection and many oaths; then, turning to the two old men, he bowed courteously.

"Good-morrow, Mr. Bampfield; good-morrow, good Dr. Griffith; I hope I see you both well. Why, by the powers! you have made another man of my friend here. Hugo, the gods must have given you the hide of a rhinoceros, and the strength of a Hercules, to have recovered so speedily. Here gaoler! bring us some wine, we must drink to my good friend's health. They tell me you have a full cellar in this grim hole, and that Bacchus smiles kindly on the wan prisoner if he doth but show him the glint of gold. Come, bring us your best."

Griffith, aghast at this unseemly merriment, asked leave of Scroop to go forth for his daily exercise, and Hugo, much relieved to see him depart, gave himself up to the enjoyment of his friend's visit, only bidding

him moderate his noise lest Bampfield should be disturbed.

"Nay," said the old man, from the other side of the hearth, "nay, you disturb me not. Enjoy your friend, my lad, and do not trouble about me."

"A jolly old sinner, worth ten of the other with his vinegar face!" exclaimed Rupert, in an audible aside. "Sir, we drink to your health. Long life and prosperity to Mr. Francis Bampfield."

"I thank you for the toast, gentlemen," said Bampfield, smiling kindly on them. "'Twas courteously meant. Yet I do not desire either the one or the other. I am content to be without what men call prosperity, preferring to be the Lord's free prisoner. And as to long life, why, your friend will tell you it is scarce to be wished for in this cell."

"In truth we have suffered much since this cold," said Hugo. "Scroop tells me prisoners die by scores in the other wards. We are lapped in luxury here, yet the cold is so intense that our breath freezes on the pillow, and we almost forget what warmth means."

"Ah! if you were but free, what times we would have!" exclaimed Denham, with a sigh. "The Thames is frozen—did they tell you? A fresh town is springing up in mid-river, streets of booths, folks walking or skating in all parts, coaches plying up and down from Westminster to the Temple, and all London turned out to see the fun. It is a carnival, I tell you! By St. Kit, I would give the world for you to be there to see! Oxen roasted whole, bull-baiting, horse-races, puppet-plays, and gewgaws and vendors enough for a Bartholomew fair. See here, I had my name printed right in

mid-stream, for some wily craftsman hath set up a printing-press there, which takes mighty well and brings in much custom."

He took from his pocket a neatly-printed card, with a treble border, and the words:

"Mr. Rupert Denham,
Printed on the River of Thames being frozen,
In the 36th year of King Charles II.,
24th January, 1684."

Hugo was eager to hear all the news; even to look at Denham's jolly face cheered him. At length, with something of an effort, he stemmed the tide of his merriment and asked the question that was most at his heart.

"My brother,—have you seen him?"

"Ay, I saw him not long since," said Denham, frowning.

"And you spoke with him?"

"I!" exclaimed Denham, wrathfully. "Odds-fish, my dear fellow, I would sooner be hanged? Speak to him, i' faith! Why, I would not so much as touch my beaver to him in the street!"

Hugo was silent for a minute.

"Where did you see him?" he asked at length.

"At the Temple Church." Then, as Hugo looked surprised, "Oh, all the world and his wife was there; 'twas no ordinary day, it was to hear the rival organs played, and to be present at the final decision."

"Ah! hath that at length been done?" said Hugo, much interested.

He had watched the rival organ-builders, Father

Smith and Renatus Harris, for many months; each had built an organ in different parts of the Temple Church, and the finest organ was to be retained; they both proved, however, so perfect that the decision was a most difficult one, and the builders went on challenging each other, and adding new stops to each organ, until it seemed that the choice would never be made.

"And how hath it ended?" asked Hugo eagerly.

"Well, Dr. Tudway came and performed on Father Smith's instrument, and Lulli on the other, and all the world came to hearken; and who do you think they chose to judge betwixt the two?—why, that beast, that fiend, that devil incarnate, Jeffreys!"

"I am sorry he had a hand in it," said Hugo. "To which builder did he award the palm?"

"To Father Smith; but they say the other organ hath suffered nothing in reputation, for the choice hath baffled better judges than Jeffreys."

"And Randolph," returned Hugo, "did he look well?"

"I don't know," said Rupert. "He had been drinking, and seemed in very jovial mood. There, don't speak of him; it makes my gorge rise. Pardon me, I know he was your brother once, but methinks, now he hath disowned you, you might give me leave to rail at him."

"I have not disowned him," said Hugo, quietly; "therefore, let us say no more on that point."

Denham bottled up his wrath till he was out of Newgate; but then, finding it no longer controllable, joined a band of scourers, and spent the evening in wrenching off door-knockers, assaulting defenceless shop-signs, frightening the chapmen into fits, and hustling

everything that was capable of being hustled. Seeing Randolph Wharncliffe and his villainy in all these innocent objects, he at length worked off his indignation, and returned to Norfolk Street by-and-by, fairly well content with his day's work.

CHAPTER XVI.

FRANCIS BAMPFIELD, SAINT.

Come, gentle death! the ebb of care;
The ebb of care, the flood of life;
The flood of life, the joyful fare;
The joyful fare, the end of strife;
The end of strife, that thing wish I,
Wherefore come death, and let me die.

Anon. 1557.

ALL was very quiet in the Newgate cell. It was night. Griffith slept and forgot the cold, but a rushlight dimly revealed two wakeful figures. Bampfield lay on a mattress close to the fire, and Hugo sat beside him, or rather crouched beside him, for the cold was excruciating, and made him shiver from head to foot. He had piled almost all the wraps at his disposal on the dying man, and, when Bampfield remonstrated, made light of it.

"After two months of this weather, I am acclimatised," he said, smiling. "Your age and infirmity make you feel the cold more."

"Nay, dear lad," said the old man; "'tis not my age makes me cold, 'tis the beginning of death. I shall

never be warm again—never again. Tell me, what day is it?"

"I heard St. Sepulchre's bell ring twelve but a few minutes since," replied Hugo. "It must be the 16th of February."

He had to think a little, to calculate those weary days of the month; for time was monotonous in Newgate, and there was little to note its slow flight. Nay, the word flight was a mockery, time crept.

"This will be my last day of earth," said Bampfield, smiling. "Do not look so startled, so shocked. I am dying, but, if you loved me, you would rejoice. Feel my feet, they are cold as stone; feel my pulse, it waxes feeble. Christ means to call one of His under-shepherds home to Him this day to render his account."

Hugo looked at the worn, sunken face, with its dark shadows. He saw that Bampfield was right. A great change had come over the features that had grown so dear to him. He covered his face with his hands and wept.

"I have been more of a care than a comfort to you of late," said Bampfield, feebly. "More of a care than a comfort, lad. Yet mayhap you will miss me the more for that. I think you will miss the old man. But, dear lad, do not grudge me my release. For I am weary, weary, and heavy-laden."

"Let me call Dr. Griffith," said Hugo, dashing the tears from his eyes. "Perchance he might ease you."

"Nay, wake him not," said Bampfield; "he watched beside me last night, and is weary. Besides he could do naught. Hugo, it seems to me something strange that, after years and years of imprisonment for preach-

ing the gospel, I at length die in gaol, not for the crime of preaching, but for refusing to take an oath. A strange crime, methinks."

"If you could but have done so with a good conscience!" said Hugo, who never had been able to understand the old man's difficulty.

"But I could not," said Bampfield. "For see here! I do not only bind my soul to obey the King that now is, but his heirs and successors also. And I know not what his successor may be; for aught I know he may be a Popish successor. Neither can I swear to obey laws not yet in being, nor to be obedient to a Papist. Therefore, as things now are, it is impossible for me to take the oath of allegiance. Come life, come death, the Lord assisting me, I will never take it."

"'Tis true Christ saith, 'Swear not at all,'" said Hugo, musingly, "and bade men give but a plain yes or no."

"Ay, dear lad," said Bampfield, his face lighting up, "and methinks I see a day, far distant as yet, when His rule shall be obeyed in this land that calls itself His, but keeps not His word. Oh! those university oaths! so many and so oft multiplied by inconsiderate students! How much guilt has been contracted thereby."

"You die, then, as the proto-martyr in this cause. You die protesting against taking of oaths."

Bampfield smiled.

"I have trudged along through evil report and through good report, and, through the help of Christ, I trust I may be his servant and witness to the death. There is one last thing I would ask you."

"Ask anything," said Hugo, "and, if it only lie in my power, I will do it."

"Nay, I know not how that will be," said Bampfield, tenderly. "I would in no way force thy conscience. Didst ever take the sacrament, lad?"

"Once only," said Hugo, his thoughts flying away from the dark prison to the sunny church at Mondisfield.

"Will you take it once more with me before I leave you? When the sun is risen, we will waken Dr. Griffith and make ready."

But Hugo hesitated.

"He would not think me fit," he faltered.

"When did the Saviour of mankind ever wait for men to be fit for Him?" said Bampfield, earnestly. "'He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him to them gave He power.'"

"But Dr. Griffith will object," said Hugo.

He had meant Griffith all along, but was too reserved to say so.

And he was right. Griffith did object. Hugo was not of their communion; he had made no special profession of devout feeling all these months, had not added his testimony to the testimony of the saints, had not altogether lost the polite art, as it was then considered, of swearing, and, worst of all, had not hesitated to drink with that most noisy and boisterous Templar, Rupert Denham. But the dying man overruled all these objections with one gentle sentence.

"'Tis my last wish," he said, faintly. "And in truth, good Griffith, I was always for Christ's open

house-keeping, since I had inner acquaintance with Him."

And so when the sun rose the three drew together, forgetting their differences; and when the brief, solemn service was over, Bampfield bade Hugo rest.

"You can do no more for me, dear lad," he said, clasping his hand closely. "I have no other wants. For here in Newgate prison my Lord is with me to the full satisfaction of my whole man."

They were the last words Hugo ever heard him speak. For when, some hours later, he awoke from sound and dreamless sleep, and looked hastily around, he saw that the death-angel had visited the cell. The sunshine of that Saturday morning streamed in through the prison grating, and fell full upon the peaceful face, the face from which Death's gentle hand had smoothed the lines and furrows, leaving only the radiant smile with which Christ's "Under-Shepherd" had greeted the dawning Sabbath.

Bampfield had passed into the Unseen, where there will be no dispute as to whether the Lord's-Day should be kept on the Saturday or the Sunday, since Rest-days will be merged in the eternal "Work without weariness," which is true rest.

How infinitely little seemed now the disputes and controversies—but how priceless the patient endurance, the self-sacrifice, the willingness to suffer for what he had deemed the truth. Who could doubt that, while his worn-out body lay in the prison cell, he himself had seen the King in His beauty,—had entered into the joy of his Lord.

They buried him in the presence of a vast crowd

of on-lookers, in the burial-ground behind the Baptist Chapel in Glass House Yard, Goswell Street. But, although many mourned for him, none mourned so truly as his fellow-prisoners.

Hugo seemed unable to recover from this second blow, and in truth it seemed as if that spring he was to be brought into perpetual nearness to death. One day Thomas Delaune was brought to the cell, Scroop having assigned him Bampfield's vacant place. He came a broken-down, broken-hearted man. His babe was dead, his wife was dead, he himself looked as though his days were numbered, while little Tom, so bonny and rosy a few months before, was now a little ghost of a child, seldom complaining, seldom even speaking, but slowly and silently fading away. That cruel winter in Newgate had much to answer for.

The new-comers roused Hugo from his dull apathy. He listened to poor Delaune's complaints; he listened a hundred times to his favourite assertion that "Newgate was a severe kind of logic, and would probably dispute him out of the world." He listened to all the arguments of the luckless pamphlet which had cost the writer so dear; and the poor, unhappy man learnt to love him and to lean on him, even though he showed a hopeless inaptitude for theological discussions.

Mary came often with her uncle to visit them, and she did her best for the little boy, who lingered on until the spring. The father, though refusing to let the child go, was too ill himself to attend to it; Mary did the nursing by day, and Hugo by night.

One morning Tom looked up languidly from the little bed which they had made for him.

"I would like to see out of doors," he said, faintly.

"Could you not hold him up to the window?" said Mary. "I do not think the air could hurt him."

And Hugo held him high up in his arms, so that the little fellow could peep out through the bars.

He saw the sun shining brightly, he saw the trees around Christ's Hospital, and heard the sound of the boys at their play.

"You said I couldn't come too when you went to Die," he said, faintly, as they laid him once more in bed. "But I am going now. Die is better than prison; I dreamed in the night all about it, and there are green trees, and children that sing, and no bars between—no hard, cold bars."

He glanced up at the window until, to his dazzled sight, the light overpowered the darkness, and where the grating had been was only a golden glory. Then, tired with the brightness, his eyes closed, and gradually unconsciousness crept over him, and thus death took him painlessly away from Newgate to the land where there are "no bars between."

Delaune did not long survive his child. Father, mother, and the two poor little children all met their death because it was deemed a crime to put forth a pamphlet which stated the views of a Nonconformist. Truly the liberty of the press has not been secured to Englishmen without tears and blood.

At length Hugo was once more in solitary confinement. For Griffith, honest, worthy, narrow Dr. Griffith was pardoned, and once more took his place among free men. They parted in all kindness, and Hugo's congratulations were quite sincere. But although, had

they lived together for years, they could never have been friends, he missed the old doctor sorely. Solitude was terrible, even when for part of the day Jeremiah was allowed to be with him, and his friends to visit him. But he had that wretched feeling of being left behind which is of all things most dreary. The King had pardoned Griffith, but he would not pardon him, and even Death, who had released all the others, refused to come to his aid. In vain Mary and Rupert did their best to keep up his spirits. His attacks of ague returned, he lost hope, enduring indeed bravely and patiently, but no longer dreaming of escape, of liberty, and of Joyce.

One day Mary, returning home, fairly burst into tears.

"He will die, aunt," she sobbed; "he will die if he stays there much longer. Oh! what can be done? How may we save him?"

"My dear niece, I see no way of saving him," said Lady Denham, sadly. "We can but do our best to lighten his imprisonment."

That evening they went to the theatre. The play was *Romeo and Juliet,* the last that Mary would have chosen to witness; but, although sad-hearted and weary, she would not stay home, for it was against her own rule to allow her attendance on Hugo in any way to interfere with her home life. She still went with her aunt to receptions and balls, she danced and talked, despite her heavy heart, and lived down the gossip which inevitably arose about her friendship for young Mr. Wharncliffe. She felt herself the custodian of his honour, and this gave her strength to meet banter with

indifference, teazing with a smile, and searching questions about Hugo with never a blush. To have shut herself up at home would have been to give rise to scandal; she bravely went into society almost every evening, as much for Hugo's sake as she went to Newgate in the morning.

Suddenly, as the play passed before her tired eyes, a thought flashed into her mind. The Friar was speaking with Juliet, and something in his manner startled her into sudden attention, though she had not noted what had passed just before.

> "Hold, daughter; I do spy a kind of hope,
> Which craves as desperate an execution
> As that is desperate which we would prevent."

She had never read or seen this play before; Shakespere was emphatically not the poet of the Restoration, and his plays were but seldom acted. Breathlessly she watched the gift of the magic vial, the contents of which were to make Juliet look as one dead. Eagerly she looked at the fair corpse as it was carried forth to the grave. After all it was not so hard to counterfeit death. And death might be the deliverer. Death apparently was the only deliverer from Newgate. All that night she lay awake in a fever of excitement as gradually the details of the escape shaped themselves more and more clearly in her mind. The next morning she went straight to her uncle, for without his co-operation she saw that nothing could be done, but she went hopefully, for she knew that he had always refused to see any political principle involved in Hugo's imprisonment, she knew that he was extremely fond of him, and would sacrifice almost anything to save him.

The uncle and niece were closeted together for more than an hour. Later in the day they went together to Newgate.

CHAPTER XVII.

HOPES AND FEARS.

I'll be as patient as a gentle stream,
And make a pastime of each weary step,
Till the last step have brought me to my love:
And there I'll rest, as after much turmoil,
A blessed soul doth in Elysium.

SHAKESPERE.

"YOU have been growing ever less hopeful of late," said Mary, reproachfully.

"For what can I hope?" said Hugo wearily. "To dream of escape is idle, every day I grow weaker. Do you know that it has come to this, I can no longer climb up to the grating. The men who saw their way through iron, and gnaw their way through stone, are men strong of limb, sinewy and vigorous, they have not been weakened by torture, and starvation, and damp and cold; they are not liable to be overtaken every other day by the ague, or if so then they must be men of tougher nature. It is useless to talk to me of escape. There is only one deliverer from Newgate, and he comes to all prisoners sooner or later, therefore he must some day come to me."

There was unusual bitterness in his tone. He knew that he was losing strength rapidly, and the consciousness humiliated him.

"Indeed," said Mary, "it doth seem that death is the only deliverer. Have there been many deaths lately?"

"Yes, the hard winter has done its work, the young and the old died in the frost, the others lingered longer, but Scroop tells me there are deaths daily in the common wards."

"Then perhaps they are not very particular as to the disposal of the dead?" said Sir William.

"Nay, the great thing is to hustle forth the corpse that its space may be taken by some other wretch."

"Scroop is friendly to you, I believe?"

"Yes, he hath ever been that. I don't know why."

"Suppose you were to follow the fair Juliet's example," said Sir William, "do you think Scroop would, if admitted into the secret, put you himself into the coffin, and see that you were borne to my house?"

Hugo started to his feet with an exclamation of surprise and alarm, which was nevertheless tinged with a wild hope.

"Let us talk the matter over quietly," said Sir William, lowering his voice, "I see no reason why we should not try the plan, and bring it to a more successful issue than the good folks of Verona. The question is, do we do well to risk admitting Scroop to the secret? To ask his help is to betray ourselves."

"Nothing can be done without him," said Hugo. "He is keen as any hawk, that is why the governor trusts him with so much. But yet I know not whether he would risk so much out of love for me. Why indeed should anyone? why should you run so grave a danger for the sake of one not even of your own kin?

Were I discovered, think how grave the results might be for yourself. Nay, I cannot permit it. You must not incur so great a risk for me."

"Why, my dear boy, do you not know that but a few days since that vile Captain Clifford found friends willing to rescue him from the Fleet? If they were willing to run the risk for such an one, do you think we shall not be willing to do as much for you? And in good time here comes your gaoler. We will withdraw, and you shall tell him as much as you think fit."

Now the gaoler had really learnt to love Hugo, and when, bit by bit, the plan of escape was intrusted to him, it was no bribe which made him consent to lend his help. He knew that, if he refused, Hugo would remain a few months longer in Newgate, and would then inevitably die. He saw no harm whatever in giving him a false certificate of death, nay, he rubbed his hands with delight at the prospect of a little plot within the gaol, a little excitement in the midst of his dreary life of routine work. As to any drug he said there was no necessity for it whatever. No one would come to look at the prisoner. He should duly nail him up in his coffin, report his death to the governor, and have his body delivered to his friends.

When this was arranged, Sir William, and old Jeremiah having joined them in the cell and discussed all the details with Scroop, it only remained to fix the time of the escape. Hugo, hardly able to stand, so great was his excitement, looked eagerly from one to the other, knowing that he must leave the day to them, and yet so eager to seize that very instant that he hardly knew how he should endure any delay. Breath-

lessly he listened to Sir William's thoughtful, cautious arguments, which, to his satisfaction, ended with the remark.

"After all, delays are dangerous—the sooner a plot is carried through the less risk to it. When are you liable to your next attack of ague?"

"This very day," groaned Hugo, who had forgotten his old enemy.

"Nay, do not be disheartened, that will exactly serve our turn," said Sir William. "We shall let fall that you are not long for this world, Scroop will tell the governor there is no hope for you, which in truth will be the case an you stay here much longer. Then in the night you will die; next evening we shall send a coffin for your remains, with bearers who can be trusted, Jeremiah would naturally be one, my butler another, Rupert must be intrusted with our secret, so he might figure as a third, and I have no doubt Colonel Sydney's man Ducasse would be a willing and safe man for the fourth. How say you, Mr. Gaoler, will that be well?"

"Your honour could not have planned it better," said Scroop, taking grim delight in all the arrangements.

"Well, then, do you second our efforts faithfully, and if all is brought to a happy issue, then come to my house this day se'nnight and I will give you twenty golden guineas."

Scroop's little eyes twinkled. He loved gold. Nevertheless, he would have risked all only for Hugo's sake.

"There's one thing more, sir," said the gaoler, just

as the visitors were preparing to leave. "The coffin, sir; you must measure Mr. Wharncliffe."

Spite of themselves they all laughed, as Hugo lay down on the bed to be measured, whilst alive, for his coffin. Nor was the task easy, since they had no proper implements, and were only too well aware that any error now might prove the destruction of their hopes. In the end Mary sacrificed the lace edging of her mantle, tore it off in long strips and with infinite care took those dread measurements. Then, tremulously winding up the lace, she glanced round the little room which had grown so familiar to her. If all went well, this was the last time she should ever enter it. There was no denying that, spite of anxiety and sorrow, those months of attendance on Hugo had been very sweet; she knew now that they were over, she knew that he would have to fly the country, and that in all probability she should never look on him again. For a moment the tears rushed to her eyes, even in the fulfilment of her own scheme, and in the prospect of the consummation of her hopes;—after all she was but a woman. But driving back her tears she looked at Hugo. There was new life in his face, new hope, eager and rapturous expectation. That look was her reward. She bore it with her all the day; having learnt to weep with those that wept, she now learnt to rejoice with those that rejoiced.

In the meantime Hugo, almost beside himself with the thought of all the possibilities of the next few hours, made such preparations as he could for the escape. There was very little to be done. He begged Jeremiah to see that his three beloved books were

placed with him in the coffin, then restlessly pacing the cell began to discuss the future with the old man.

"I shall have to leave London at once, Jerry," he said; "I shall have, of course, to leave England, but first I must down to Suffolk to Colonel Wharncliffe's place. In the meantime what will become of you? How am I ever to reward all that you have done for me?"

"By letting me be with you, lad," said Jeremiah; "I want no reward but that, and I have laid by enough to serve us both for a while."

Hugo wrung his hand.

"My dear old friend," he said, gratefully, "when once we are safe in Holland I will work for the two of us. See, Jerry: if you will indeed share my fortunes, how would it be if you went on to Harwich, then I will meet you there when I have kept my promise and seen Colonel Wharncliffe and—and his family."

"There is one thing we must have a care of," said Jeremiah, gravely. "No rumour of your death must reach Mr. Randolph, else mayhap he may be claiming your body for burial."

Hugo shuddered.

"I had not thought of that," he said. "And yet methinks there is no fear. He hath disowned me in life, why should he claim me in death?"

No more was said just then, for ere long Hugo fell into a violent shivering fit, and was forced to go through all the weary stages of his fever, ever with the thought of his escape floating through his mind. Night drew on, Jeremiah was obliged to go, and he bent down and

embraced his master as he heard the gaoler unlock the door, the signal that his time was up.

"For the last time, dear lad, the last time," he said, fervently. "God have you in His keeping."

"Last time!" said a harsh voice behind him. "Why for the last time, pray?"

The old Cromwellian was not to be startled, though in mortal terror he rose quietly, and in the dimly-lighted cell turned to confront the speaker. He had made sure that it was Scroop who had unlocked the door. Scroop had always come to him before at that time; by what evil chance had some other come on this night of all others! He turned and confronted the governor of Newgate.

"Come now, explain yourself, what is this about last time?"

"Sir, yonder lies the explanation," said Jeremiah, waving his hand in the direction of the bed.

The governor bent down nearer to the patient and saw that he was in a raging fever; he touched the burning brow and recoiled.

"'Tis but the ague," he said, carelessly. "An I remember right, the prisoner hath suffered from it this long time."

"He will not suffer much longer, the Lord be praised," said Jeremiah. "Oh! sir, for God's sake let me be with my master this night. Load me with fetters, an you will, but let me be with him to the end."

"Damnation take your impudence!" said the governor, harshly. "Do you think men are to be pampered like princes here in gaol? Be off with you!

The prisoner is no more dying than I am; he'll outlive you, you grumbling greybeard, that I dare swear."

Jeremiah said no more, but once more embraced the prisoner and went forth with bowed head.

Hugo was vaguely aware that the governor was present; he fancied that somehow their plans were in great danger, but his fevered brain had not seen the true bearings of the case, he did not know that Jeremiah had adroitly made the most of his illness, and had really impressed the governor with the idea that he was dying.

Presently Scroop entered. Hugo was aware that he was talking to the governor. He began to tremble. Would the man betray them? What was this he was saying? Oh, that he were not in this distorting fever, which would not let him see or hear things as they really were!

"How now, Scroop, is this gentleman really dying? His man swears he'll not outlast the night. In that case, maybe we ought to let his brother have due notice. Methinks they would try to force evidence from him once more."

"Oh, he'll outlast the night, sir," said Scroop, confidently. "I don't think there is any call to send at this hour."

After that the governor went away, and Scroop, having placed some water beside the patient, followed him, locking and bolting the door with his usual noisiness.

It was a terrible night for Hugo, for when at length the fever-stage passed, he was left to an agony of fear and apprehension, vaguely remembering scraps of the

conversation that had passed in the cell, and seeing as he had never seen before the thousand risks which lay before him.

Had Scroop been faithful? He could not feel sure. Had the governor suspected aught? He could not tell. Would they indeed send word to Randolph? And would his brother claim his body, and perhaps bury it before the others could interfere? Horrible visions rose before him in the darkness. He was buried alive; he was discovered before the coffin was nailed down, and all his friends suffered for their attempts to help him. He was permitted to escape, but was overtaken on the Newmarket Road by Randolph. Or again all was checked at the outset, and he remained in that cell, deserted by all men, until he was old and grey-headed.

His brain reeled, he groaned aloud in the anguish of his imaginings. And then in the dark cell there came to him the echoes of a woman's voice, the voice which day by day had spoken words of comfort to him. He remembered how once before in despair those words had come to his aid, "Bid Hope throw her rainbow arch over the future you paint so black."

It was as if an angel had bid him be of good cheer. He turned from the thoughts of terror and darkness, and thought of Joyce. Once more that vision rose before him of Joyce beneath the elm-trees at the gate, waiting to bid some one welcome. He had said in his letter that she welcomed her father; what if instead it was her lover for whom she waited! His very rapture made him calm, for how much—how much depended on his self-control, on his wisdom? Conscious of this, he fell on his knees and prayed in the words of that

collect which was most familiar to him for the spirit to think and do always such things as be rightful.

A few minutes later, he was sleeping peacefully, and for the last time the moonlight streamed in through the grated window and lit up his quiet face. Just so had it fallen months before upon him on the night of his first admission to Newgate. Then Bampfield had knelt beside him and prayed; perchance even now he did the same unseen; perchance he was able to see that there was no need, since the proof that his prayers had been answered lay in the wonderful change which in these months had passed over the face of the sleeper.

"Very well," said Scroop, cheerfully, as he entered the cell next morning. "You are now dead, sir. As good luck will have it, the governor will be out till evening. I shall mention to him just as he leaves that you are dead, and that your friends have begged your body for burial. No one can now enter the cell but me; you have nothing to fear, but have only to keep quiet. I have brought you what food I was able to bring without being observed, for the daily dole will not be brought to a corpse."

"All lies now in your hands," said Hugo, anxiously. "But there, I trust you, Scroop—I have good reason to trust you."

The gaoler gave an inscrutable smile, and went away without another word, locking the door behind him. He went straight to the governor's house. That worthy had business at Edmonton, and was just preparing to ride thither.

"How now, Scroop, I cannot see to business," he

exclaimed. "Confound you! can't you see I'm starting on a journey?"

"'Tis naught, your honour," said Scroop, deferentially. "I will not detain your honour. I did but just bring you word that young Mr. Wharncliffe is dead. He must have died i' the night, sir; for this morning, going into his cell as usual, I found him cold as any stone. 'Tis passing strange, for I could have sworn upon oath last night that he'd have been spared to us many a day to come. But 'tis ever the way, sir. Them as is worth plucking dies first, and such as be not worth a penny lasts till kingdom come."

The governor swore a deep oath.

"There goes a good slice of my income," he said, resentfully. "Sir William Denham is soft as to the heart and heavy as to the purse. I doubt Mr. Wharncliffe will never know how well his friends have lined my pockets. Do they know of his death?"

"Ay, sir; and they wish him to be brought away for burial, an' you will permit."

"Why, confound them! they are welcome to the corpse! An they like to save us the trouble of putting it in the earth, so much the better. Give me living bodies to grow rich on, not dead ones. I'll have a look at the corpse to-morrow; it is too late now. I cannot be delayed."

Scroop went away well satisfied. All promised well; he was not afraid for the result. He went about all day talking to his brother-gaolers of the good source of income which he had lost. He jested about the garnish which he had received from Hugo. He paid up a bet which he had made on the previous night of ten to one

on Hugo's recovery. And thus the day passed—a day of suspense to all the parties concerned, and to the prisoner almost unendurable. At length the day-light faded, and as darkness once more fell upon the gloomy little room he knew that the crisis of his fate drew near. By-and-by there were steps without, and the key turned in the lock. He lay motionless on the bed with closed eyes. Supposing it should not be Scroop? He trembled, and knew that he trembled; it was no easy thing to enact death. Some one came and bent over him, then broke into a laugh.

"Corpses must lie still, young gentleman," exclaimed Scroop, in a low voice. "An you tremble like that, you'll make the very coffin shake."

Hugo sat up with a gasp of relief.

"You gave me a terrible fright," he said, breathlessly. "Ah, it is come then!"

He looked with rapture at the grim, black coffin which was to prove his salvation. Scroop went into silent convulsions of laughter.

"'Tis not often one of your sort is so welcome!" he exclaimed, apostrophising the coffin with a little patronising caress. "Sounds as if there was plenty of room, doesn't it?" as the hollow lid resounded to his flippant pat. "Well, sir, in with you. The sooner the better, for your friends wait at the gate."

Hugo grasped the gaoler's rough hand, thanking him fervently for all he had done for him, but Scroop cut his farewells short, and, brushing a tear from his eye, once more bade him make no more delay.

Then, with a slight shiver, Hugo lay down in the narrow coffin; Scroop, at his request, laid the three

books beside him, disposed the woollen shroud so that it should not cover his mouth, and then closed the lid. Hugo gasped for breath. There were airholes purposely pierced for him. He knew that he should not be suffocated, but yet the darkness and closeness were terrible. Then came the screwing down of the lid, a horrible grating sound close to his head; it was ghastly! It came again at his feet, and again on either side of him: the process seemed endless. At length came a pause. Scroop threw down his implements on the floor, and, unlocking the door, went out. Hugo guessed that he had gone to summon the bearers. He began to grow calmer; all seemed going so smoothly. Surely now there was nothing to fear!

All at once his heart began to beat wildly, to thump against his breast so violently that he thought it must be audible all over the cell. For steps had drawn near, footsteps too light for Scroop's heavy shuffling tread.

"The devil! what have we here! Why, nailed up, already!"

It was the voice of the governor of Newgate, and through the air-holes Hugo could see that a light was held close to his coffin. There was a terrible pause. Would the fellow hear the beating of his heart? Could he keep rigidly still when he was in such an agony of fright? There came the tramp of feet in the corridor. All his friends were coming, Rupert, Jeremiah, Ducasse, and Sir William's old butler. What would happen to them, he wondered, should the trick be discovered? The governor stepped to the door.

"Why, how now, Scroop, nailed the young fellow

up already? I said I should come and look at him on the morrow."

"'Tis true, your honour," said Scroop, humbly. "But Sir William Denham sent his men, and begged the body to-night, and as they'd brought the coffin, I thought they might as well take the body and free the room, which your honour remembers is a valuable one."

"Well, well, 'tis no great matter. Where are his irons? He wore them an I mistake not."

"But a light pair, your honour, and truth to tell, in the haste of the moment, I forgot to file them off. But the corpse is not laid out, and no doubt Sir William's servant will restore the shackles, since they must open the coffin."

"A pest on your laziness! open the coffin now and take them off here. Don't you know the shackles are the property of the gaol? I've lost enough in Mr. Wharncliffe, and will not lose the fetters with him into the bargain."

Scroop, in a terrible fright, went to get a file; he saw that he had made a fearful mistake, he cursed his folly. Why had he not said that he had taken the irons off? Why had he not thought of this before? Were all his plans to be baffled? Was Hugo to be condemned to perpetual imprisonment for the sake of a pair of shackles? He was so paralysed by this unforeseen occurrence that his wits forsook him; he could think of no fresh plan. In dogged despair he brought a file, and then slowly began to unscrew the lid of the coffin.

Again that horrible grating sound. Hugo lay still in silent agony; his only hope now was in his being

able to feign death. The last screw was at length removed, the lid was raised, a rush of fresh air and red light greeted him as he lay there with closed eyes, the voices which before had sounded thick and muffled now beat loud and clear upon his ears.

Scroop, seizing the light, placed it at the foot of the coffin and began to file away with all his might at the shackles, Hugo letting his leg lie limply in his hold, and relieved to feel that his face must be in shadow. The governor glanced at him.

"He was a pretty fellow enough," he remarked. "I reckon some maid will have a sore heart for him. That fair Mistress Denham loved him, I dare swear. How now, Scroop, burying his books with him?"

"I thought mayhap his friends would like to have them, sir," said the gaoler.

"But belike I should care to have them. You are overpartial to this young gentleman and his friends, and would rob me of my dues."

He stooped and took up the *Republic of Plato*, hastily glancing through the contents. As he did so the oak-leaf which Algernon Sydney had placed in the book on that spring day in Penshurst Park, fluttered out from between the pages and fell exactly on Hugo's mouth. He knew what it must be, he could feel the leaf gently moving with every breath he drew; in another instant the governor must notice it.

That was the last straw! he had endured much, but this was too much for him. He fainted away.

"Well, well," said the governor, "he seems to have but a dry library. I care not for it. His friends are welcome to such books as those."

He placed them in the coffin, and bent down for a last look at the corpse, removing the oak-leaf from its face. As he did so, his hand came into contact with the cheek,—he drew back with a shudder.

"He was too hot last night, and, i' faith! now he's too cold by half!" he remarked, with an uneasy laugh. He felt vaguely sorry for the young life cut off; he wished the prisoner had lived longer and had put more golden guineas into his pockets.

When Hugo came to himself, all was dark once more, dark and close. He gasped for breath, and involuntarily raised his hand, groping in the darkness. His fingers speedily came into contact with the coffin lid, and this recalled to him all that had passed. Had he indeed betrayed himself? had the governor seen that he breathed? The oak-leaf was no longer on his mouth—that was certain; the lid was screwed down again, that also was certain. But what if the governor had insisted on his being buried in the prison graveyard? What if Scroop, to save himself, should really allow him to be buried alive? The cold sweat rose on his forehead at the thought; it was all he could do not to scream aloud, to shout to all the world that he was alive, when he felt his coffin raised, raised staggeringly on men's shoulders, to be borne—whither?

The horrible, swaying motion, the lurching first to one side, then to the other, as he was lifted up, made him turn faint once more. When he again came to himself, he was being borne swiftly along, and he could distinguish that they were in the street, for there were sounds of horses' hoofs, sounds of wheels, sounds of many feet and many voices. A fresh terror seized him.

What if the governor had insisted on sending his corpse to his brother instead of to the Denhams? That would be worst of all, worse even than the prospect of being buried alive. He tried to make out in what direction he was being carried, but in vain, and it was not until he heard Jeremiah's unmistakeable cough echoing sepulchrally beneath him that he began to feel reassured. Jerry he knew would die rather than take him to Randolph.

And then hope rose again for him, an ecstasy of hope, and he laughed to himself with silent delight as he heard the sweet, shrill voice of a girl chanting the familiar street-cry,

"Here are fine golden pippins, who'll buy them, who'll buy?
Nobody in London sells better than I. Who'll buy them, who'll buy?"

It took him back to Mondisfield, to that first day when little Evelyn had run after him with the king-pippins. That was in reality only eighteen months ago, but it seemed to him more like eighteen years. And then once more the rapture of the thought that this was the first stage of his journey to Joyce overpowered all else; he could not definitely think, he could only silently enjoy, feeding on that one consciousness. Suddenly a little additional shaking, and a motion of the coffin which made him feel giddy. He knew that his bearers had taken a turn to the left; they must have turned down Norfolk Street. Soon after a pause, more shaking, while one of the bearers knocked at the door, then muffled voices, and again he was borne on into the house, and deposited jarringly on a table. How soon would they release him? he wondered. Not just

yet, not till such of the household who were not to be admitted to the secret had gone to bed. The waiting seemed long. At length he heard anxious voices saying that all was safe.

"Indeed you ought to delay no longer, sir," said old Thomas. "For the young gentleman was in a swoon when we closed the lid, and who knows if he be recovered?"

Hugo raised his hand and beat on the lid to reassure them.

Denham laughed.

"Ay, ay, we hear you," he said. "Come, Thomas, be quick and unscrew him; he longs for his resurrection."

For the second time the lid was lifted; Hugo, dazzled and exhausted, sat up, flung aside the shroud, and looked about him. There stood his deliverers, the four bearers very weary with their exertions, for they had carried him a long distance, Sir William with tears of happiness in his eyes, Lady Denham with her motherly greeting, and Mary standing in the background, pale and trembling, but yet, as his eyes met hers coming forward to greet him with outstretched hand and smiling face.

CHAPTER XVIII.

SUSPENSE.

O dear life! when shall it be
That mine eyes thine eyes shall see,
And in them thy mind discover?
Whether absence have had force
Thy remembrance to divorce
From the image of thy lover.

SIR PHILIP SYDNEY.

THERE were a thousand things to be discussed and arranged, and first, as Ducasse was preparing to leave, Hugo drew him aside and spoke with him about his master; then, when the French valet had gone home all aglow with the thanks and rewards he had received, Sir William set forth his plan for the next stage of their journey.

"'Tis too late for you to pass the City gates without being too narrowly observed," he said; "therefore we think it will be best if you stay here till early morning, when you and Rupert shall ride forth together, and reach Bishop-Stortford before dark, lie there that night, and push on to Mondisfield next day. What think you of that?"

"You think the delay is not dangerous?" asked Hugo, who only longed to set off that minute.

"Nay, I see not what danger can befall you now. Your brother is not like to get news of your death

until to-morrow, and by the time he comes here you will be far away, and the coffin safely buried."

"Where is he to be buried?" asked Rupert, laughing.

"In our family grave," said Sir William, who had not undertaken to rescue Hugo without carefully planning all the details of the escape. "I have already asked young Mr. Sacheverell to read the service to-morrow at noon, and by-the-by, Thomas, it might be as well if you now fetched in the earth. Go help him, Rupert; the box stands in my laboratory."

Hugo was delighted to help in the filling up of his coffin, and when, for the last time, the lid had been screwed down, they removed it into an adjoining room, and Thomas brought in supper, for which they were all quite ready. It was arranged that Jeremiah should hire two post-horses, and meet Rupert and Hugo in a quiet back street hard by. Here they would mount unseen, and ride off in the early morning before the town was astir. Jeremiah would proceed to Harwich later in the day, after attending the funeral, and Sir William would be fully prepared to receive any remonstrances from Randolph by reminding him that, as he had disowned his brother in life it was not to be supposed that he would care for him in death.

All seemed to promise well. Surely now they were secure—surely now they might rest on their oars —might relax the strained anxiety of the last two days.

And so, when the old serving-man had gone away, and when Thomas had gone to bed, they drew together over the fire, and talked in low voices of all that had happened during Hugo's long imprisonment, and discussed his future, and spoke of Mondisfield, of Colonel

Wharncliffe,—even of Joyce. It was not, however, until Hugo was left for a few minutes alone with Mary that he could speak freely of that which was so near his heart; he felt so secure of her sympathy,—and surely this alone was sufficient to give the lie to those words the governor of Newgate had let fall about her! Those words had made Hugo vaguely uncomfortable; he remembered the change that had imperceptibly come over their friendship after he had told her of Joyce; he remembered now little details of that night at Gray's Inn —details which had conveyed nothing to him at the time, but which now returned to him, and filled him with compunction. Mary's voice startled him out of these thoughts.

"There is one confession I have to make to you," she said, colouring a little. "When you were recovered from your illness in February, I wrote and told fair Mistress Joyce that it was well with you. I meant to tell you before that I had written. Will you forgive me?"

"Why did you write?" asked Hugo, more and more perplexed.

"I could not bear her to be unhappy, and from your letter she must have been prepared to think of you as dead or dying. I could not see why she need be robbed of all hope. Was I too bold to write? Are you angry with me?"

"God bless you for it!" he said, taking her hand in his. "You may have saved her much. Oh, Mary, you are our hope-bringer; you brought hope to me in my prison, and you sent it to my dear love in her sorrow."

At that he choked, and could not say another word. Was there naught left for her, he wondered? Had she brought hope to them, and was she to be left desolate? For he could not but perceive now that there was truth in the governor's words, though aware that Mary's love was of a type which would have been incomprehensible to the speaker. Even he himself could not realise that her spiritual love gave her real joy in his joy. He felt troubled for her,—she divined his thoughts.

"Do not speak as if I were some martyr, giving all and taking nothing," she said, lightly; for so only was it possible to touch on such a subject. "Believe me, Hugo, I have had my share of happiness in what you call the hope-bringing. Why, I brought hope to myself into the bargain,—the hope of saving you, of knowing you would be on your way to Joyce ere another sun goes down. 'Twas the happiest notion ever came to me in a theatre, that of your rescue. I hope you are properly grateful to Mr. Shakspere, Mr. Killigrew, Mr. Betterton, Mrs. Bracegirdle, and all the actors and actresses who may lay claim to having a finger in this pie."

"I am grateful to none of them, save you. It was your doing."

"That is enough to content the soul of any woman," she said, laughingly, yet with a deeper meaning beneath the words which she intended him to gather. "I shall have to hand down so brave a compliment as that to Rupert's children and grand-children, that they may properly respect their kinswoman who rescued a prisoner from Newgate. I did but set the ball a-rolling. Others have had the carrying out, which was far harder."

"I cannot yet take it in," said Hugo, looking dreamily round the familiar room, which seemed so large and luxurious after his prison quarters. "I have dreamed it so often, that I half fear to wake now and find it all unreal."

"Have you thought of your future?" asked Mary. "Shall you stay long at Mondisfield?"

"No, that would scarce be wise with such a neighbour as Sir Peregrine Blake. I shall but stay there for a day or two, and then rejoin Jeremiah at Harwich, and make all speed to Amsterdam. They say that is the haven of all exiles now, since the town gallantly refuses to give up refugees."

And then they drifted back to talking of Joyce, and after a time Lady Denham returned with provisions for the journey; and so in preparations and many last words the time passed swiftly by, till at last the dawn broke, and Sir William went to rouse Rupert, who, as the surest way to keep him sober, had been induced to go to bed.

Hugo longed for the start, and yet dreaded it. He dreaded saying good-bye to the Denhams. How good they had been to him! How true and loyal in their friendship! How unlike the rest of the world! They guessed his feeling, and made the parting as cheerful as possible, Rupert as usual jesting and teazing, Sir William and Lady Denham full of kind, hospitable cares, Mary saying little, but holding the spaniel in her arms and keeping him quiet, that he might not disturb the household.

"If I could only think I should see you all again," said Hugo, huskily, when the farewells had been said.

"Why, don't lose heart now, of all times," said Rupert, cheerfully. "You'll be coming here ere long, and bringing your bride with you, I dare swear."

They were in the entrance-hall, Hugo involuntarily glanced at Mary. She smiled—a smile of perfect sympathy, and seeing that he turned impulsively, again caught her hand in his, and kissed it; then, without another word, followed Rupert out into the grey morning twilight.

All was very still, not a creature stirred in the silent streets. The two did not say much; there was somehow a solemn feeling about that journey which they had begun. Turning a corner, they came in sight of Jeremiah holding the two horses in readiness for them. They mounted in haste, and rode away with scarcely a word, for all had been arranged with the old serving-man beforehand. He watched them out of sight, then returned to the Denhams' house, ostensibly to watch beside the coffin, but in reality to collect such things as his young master would need to take into exile with him.

Meanwhile Denham and Hugo passed through Temple Bar, upon which, among the rows of heads, was set a ghastly-looking quarter, but newly added to the grim collection.

"Yonder is part of the last victim to the Plot," said Denham, pointing up with his riding-whip. "'Twas Sir Thomas Armstrong, who made the mistake of flying to Leyden instead of to Amsterdam, and, being brought back, was hanged and quartered a few days since."

Hugo shuddered.

"I heard St. Sepulchre's bell toll," he said. "But they did not tell me who it was for."

The news saddened him, and made him apprehensive; he did not breathe freely till they had left the city behind them, passed out through Bishopsgate, and gained the free, open country. Then the rapture of escape and the consciousness of comparative safety overpowered all other thoughts, and his spirits rose to the highest pitch. How beautiful was this country road along which he had last ridden a handcuffed prisoner, how green the grass was, how wide the great blue expanse of sky. Accustomed to the blank, white walls of a cell, he was almost intoxicated by the mere delight of colour, the rich brown earth freshly ploughed, the red brick of the cottages, the fresh, spring green of the trees, the golden glory of buttercups and celandines. He was like one who, returning from a long sea-voyage, greets the earth anew, comes to it once more as to a fresh paradise. He could have laughed with delight at the mere sight of the green fields, flat Essex fields though they were; the sun just rising threw its level beams over the wide landscape, the fresh morning air made mere breathing a pleasure, he was free once more, free and on his way to his love—what wonder that the dark past fled from him like a dream of the night!

After a while, hungry with their early ride, they drew rein and paused beside a field-gate to do justice to Lady Denham's provisions, while their horses cropped the grass by the roadside. A flock of sheep were feeding in the level, green pasturage. Hugo watched them with a sort of fascination, the white, woolly creatures

had never seemed beautiful to him before, but to-day he could not look long enough at them; even the cracked sheep-bell was musical, the baaing and bleating of the lambs was more delicious to his ears than the finest concert.

Then on once more through the green lanes and flowery banks, past hamlet and village, waste land and town, until at length in the evening they reached Bishop-Stortford, and, avoiding the inn at which he had slept when brought there as a prisoner, made their way to a smaller hostelry.

Then they both began to feel that the escape had tired them. They supped at once and made all speed to bed, nor troubled themselves at all with thoughts of pursuit or discovery, but slept all night with never a dream to disturb their peace. All had gone on smoothly, why should they fear now? Surely all risk was over?

"Fresh as a daisy," was Rupert's greeting, when Hugo came down the next morning.

"Your lady-love will scarce believe your dismal tales of Newgate dungeons, an you go to her looking like that."

"Have you ordered the horses?" asked Hugo, eagerly, only longing to start without delay.

"Ay, ay, they will be here anon, but oddsfish, man, you would not have us go on empty stomachs! Come, sit down and make a good meal, here is trout such as I'll warrant you have not tasted in gaol."

They were sitting in the inn parlour, a comfortable, wainscoted room, with the ceiling supported by oaken beams, and the window gay with spring flowers. They

were very merry over their breakfast; Denham told his latest stories, and they laughed over them as they had never had the heart to laugh when he had visited his friend in Newgate. For atmosphere makes a great difference, and what atmosphere could be more exhilarating than that of the cosy parlour at Bishop-Stortford on the morning on which Hugo was to return to Mondisfield?

"And so," concluded Rupert, "as the King played at Pall Mall in the park, there came to him at the most ill-convenient of times one who brought him news——" he broke off abruptly, for Hugo had turned ashy pale, and had grasped his arm.

"Hush!" he cried, "for God's sake listen."

Denham, much alarmed, held his breath. Some one was coming down the stairs, and talking meanwhile to the servant.

"A pest on your foolish pate—did I not bid you have breakfast ready for me long ere this? Let it be served forthwith, you lazy varlet. What's that? What do you say?"

The voice was not to be mistaken, Rupert knew that without doubt it was the voice of Randolph Wharncliffe. He was confounded. In all his life he had never known such a horrible moment. Not dreaming of pursuit they had walked into a trap, had by ill-luck actually thrown themselves into Randolph's arms.

But long training in adversity had taught Hugo wisdom. A year before he would have lost his head, would infallibly have been taken as he was at the table. He had not lived through those months of misery for nothing. Quick as lightning he sprang forward; in one

glance he had taken in the whole of the room, and, before Denham had time to wonder what he was about to do, had sought the sole shelter the place afforded. By the side of the hearth was a cupboard; he flung open the door, glanced in, saw that amid faggots, mops, tallow-dips, and rushlights was just room for him to hide, and without a moment's hesitation sprang in. Denham, darting forward, locked the door upon him and put the key in his pocket; then, with an agility which would have made any spectator laugh, rushed back to his place at the table, and, when the door of the parlour opened, had his face well buried in a huge tankard of ale.

As he drank he thought,—he was not good at forming schemes on the spur of the moment, but now his desperation and determination that come what might he must save his friend, stimulated him to unwonted exertion. As an actor he was in his element, and, the plan once formed, he might be trusted to carry it through with credit.

"First-rate home-brewed, that!" he remarked, setting down the tankard, and stooping to wipe his mouth on the table-cloth.

"What, Denham!" exclaimed Randolph Wharncliffe, who had come into the room, and was looking discontentedly at the table, which showed no preparation for his breakfast.

Then he remembered that since his conduct to Hugo the Denhams had had nothing to say to him, and he turned away with an oath, vexed that he had been startled into a greeting which would not be returned.

"I did not think to meet you here," said Denham

in a grave voice. The voice was so unlike his own that Randolph turned and looked at him. Rupert was paler than usual, his face was sterner.

"I am on my way to Newmarket," said Randolph, surprised that his first remark should have called forth any response. Then, with an uneasy attempt at jovial carelessness, "And, by-the-by, now I think of it, I am in your debt. Do you remember the supper we had a year last October in that country-inn?"

"Ay," said Denham, gravely. "I remember."

"An I recollect aright, you took twenty to one that Hugo would never succeed at court. Well, I own myself beaten. Hugo hath failed miserably, hath defeated all my hopes."

"Ay, he hath defeated them in a way you little reckoned on," said Denham, with an angry flash in his dark eyes. "Sir, I must speak plainly with you. I did not think to meet you here, but I am the bearer of a message which perchance will not be wholly welcome to your ears."

"Do not trouble yourself to deliver messages from Hugo. Have I not told you that I have disowned him? He is naught to me. Quit the subject, sir, at once. I will hearken to no message from him."

"You will never have to hearken to words of his again," said Denham, looking him full in the face. "I am the bearer of a message to you, but not from him. My father thought you ought to be informed that your brother is dead."

"Dead!" exclaimed Randolph, incredulously.

"Dead," repeated Denham, in his coldest voice.

"But really, sir, it can be a matter of little interest to you, seeing that you have ceased to regard him as one of your kith and kin."

Randolph made no reply, but fell back in the nearest chair. His face had become livid. Rupert continued, rather cruelly,

"I suppose his death disconcerts your plans. 'Dead men tell no tales,' as the proverb hath it. In this case dead men can unfortunately not give evidence. An you wished your brother to do that, you should not have left him to pine away his life in Newgate."

Randolph made no reply, but feeling Denham's reproachful gaze intolerable, he bent forward and hid his face in his hands.

There was a knock at the door. Denham, thinking it came from the cupboard, started violently. The servant entered, set down a pile of plates on the table, and then, to Denham's dismay, crossed the room and tried to open the cupboard door.

"Don't loiter about in here," he said, sharply. "Get what you want elsewhere; this gentleman does not wish to be disturbed; he hath private affairs to discuss with me."

"Your pardon, sir, 'tis but a faggot I want from the cupboard; but drat the door, I do declare it must be bewitched."

"Damm you and the faggots too!" said Rupert, wrathfully. "Get you gone, and fetch your firing from elsewhere. Can you not see that this gentleman wishes to be alone?"

The servant glanced at the bowed figure, and with a shrug of the shoulders left the room. Denham breathed more freely. But the danger was by no means past. Randolph raised a haggard face when the door had closed behind the servant.

"How did he die?" he asked, hoarsely.

"He had had one of his ague-fits the day before, and next morning Scroop, the gaoler, went into his cell and found him cold as a stone. The only wonder is that he hath survived so much."

"Curse their folly!" said Randolph, bitterly. "They told me he was better—they told me he got daily stronger. They told me he was well lodged and well fed, and that you did all that was permitted for his comfort."

"That was true enough," said Rupert. "We did what we could—and for Newgate he was not ill-lodged. But you know what this winter hath been. Three prisoners died before him in the same room. Was Hugo such a Hercules that he should live when all others perished? You know well enough that his strength never was anything to boast of. Why, even old Busby had to temper his floggings when Hugo was in question. You should have taken a leaf out of his book."

To his surprise, Randolph's hard face began to work convulsively. Again he bowed his head. There was silence in the room, broken only by the strong man's sobs.

In the meantime, from his hiding-place Hugo had watched the whole scene. Tremblingly he had seen

Randolph's entrance, had listened for Rupert's first words, upon which so much would hang.

It was long months since he had last seen his brother; he watched him intently, and instinctively knew that the change in his expression was a change for the worse. But yet the sight of him moved him greatly—moved him so much that he forgot his fear, forgot the terrible risk he ran, forgot that everything depended on the interview which he was watching. It was so strange to be thus an unseen spectator that he really felt as though he were dead,—as if Rupert's words were strictly true. He listened with the strangest feeling to the account of his own illness and death; he watched Randolph's face with interest and sympathy, even with a sort of joy. After all, his brother had not then in reality disowned him. He had uttered the cold words, but in his heart had all the time cared for him. He grieved for him now—grieved for him, not for the defeat of his own plans; that was cruel of Rupert to suggest such a thing,—Randolph's face gave the lie to any idea of that kind. When he saw him bow his head to hide his grief from Denham's stern gaze, it was all he could do not to make his presence known. How could he let his brother suffer thus? How could he let him live all his life long with this weight on his conscience? It was intolerable. He must reveal himself, must put an end to this ghastly farce.

At that moment the entrance of the servant had scattered all his thoughts to the winds. He suddenly realised what discovery would mean. It would mean terrible danger to all who had befriended him, it would

mean risk to Colonel Wharncliffe, it would mean an end to all hopes of seeing Joyce. For Randolph would never forgive the deception that had been practised upon him.

Panic seized Hugo as the servant shook and rattled the cupboard door; his breath came fast and hard, great drops of perspiration stood on his forehead. The servant left the room, but there was no knowing that he would not return, there was no knowing that Randolph's suspicion might not be awakened by so strange a circumstance as a cupboard door which would not open and a traveller who had left his breakfast half eaten. Through the keyhole he could see all with terrible distinctness: the chair which he had lately occupied pushed back, the unfinished plate of fish, the fragment of a manchet; Randolph sitting opposite all this, unobservant as yet, his face hidden by the long, curled wig which drooped low on the table; Denham glaring across at him, anxiety, fear, perplexity, all contending for the mastery in his face,—for, as his enemy's head was bowed for an instant, he had ceased to be an actor, was simply the embarrassed friend, scheming in vain to get this dangerous man off the premises. Hugo watched it all as if he had been watching a scene at the play; the sunshine crept in through the lattice window and lit up Randolph's grey doublet and crimson baldrick, gleamed too on the hilt of his sword. Every detail was keenly noted by the silent watcher. He even noticed the silver-handled riding-whip with the same heavy leathern thong which he had good reason to remember. How handsome Denham looked too with his merry face grave

and stern, with anxious thought in the usually careless eyes!

Once more a servant entered, this time a comely girl in red petticoat, grey cloth waistcoat, grey linsey-woolsey apron, scarlet neckerchief knotted in front, and snowy cap. She too had a try at the cupboard door. By this time Hugo had grown philosophic, had schooled himself into quiet, almost into indifference. The girl gave it up, and, going to the table, began to clear a place for Randolph.

"You have finished, sir?" she said, turning to Denham.

"Ay, clear the decks," he said, carelessly.

"The other young gentleman, sir, hath he done?"

"Ay, he has done too."

Randolph looked up.

"You are not alone, then?" he asked, glancing across the table.

"Yes, I am alone," said Denham, coolly. "But, as ill-luck would have it, I fell in with an old acquaintance on the road, and he chose to put up at this inn, which, in truth, is not so good an one as the other lower down. He was on his way to Newmarket, but I need accompany him no further on the road, for now that I have found you I shall return to London."

"I will go with you," said Randolph, raising a tankard of ale to his lips with a hand which visibly trembled. "I must attend my brother's funeral."

"Then if we mean to do that we must lose no time," said Denham. "I rode off in haste, but there was a rumour in the house that the funeral would have

to take place speedily. Unless we start off at once I doubt we shall be too late."

"I am ready to follow you," said Randolph. "I have no stomach for breakfast after your ill news. Denham, before God I swear that I never dreamed imprisonment could harm a hair of his head. I meant him but to stay there till he yielded."

Denham looked him in the face.

"Then you might have known that you were dooming him to stay there all his life," he said, sternly. "How should such as Hugo yield to you? How should light be conquered by darkness? But come, we waste time, let us have the horses round and be off at once. If I speak plainly you must pardon me; a man does not lightly lose a friend like Hugo."

Before long the horses were ready, the bills paid, the servants feed. All was quiet in the inn-parlour. Randolph had already mounted. Hugo in his cupboard could hear the horses pawing impatiently. He wondered much what would happen to him—how he was to be released! Denham's loud voice penetrated to his still retreat.

"Ay," he said, "I am ready at last. Oh, bide a bit, though. Where the devil is my tobacco-pouch? I must have left it in the parlour. Ride on, an you will; I will overtake you."

The horses' hoofs were plainly heard without. Randolph must indeed have started. Then came quick footsteps in the passage, and Denham rushed into the room, unlocked the door in a trice, and dragged out his friend.

"Safe!" he gasped. "Make all speed to Mondisfield, and fly the country as soon as may be. Things may leak out; do not linger."

Then, before Hugo could speak one word of thanks, before he could even bid him farewell, he was off once more, and the next minute Hugo saw him pass the window on his horse, making all the haste he could to rejoin Randolph.

Hugo locked the cupboard, dropped the key at a little distance, then called boldly for his bill, ordered his horse to be brought to the door, packed his saddle-bags, and in another quarter of an hour had left Bishop-Stortford behind him, and was on his way to Mondisfield.

At first, thoughts of Randolph disturbed his peace, but soon all faded save the consciousness that he was on his way to Joyce, that ere the sun went down her sorrow would be ended, that in a few hours' time he should once more clasp her to his heart, tell her how he had kept his promise, and had come back as she had bidden him. He was tired, desperately tired, for the strain of the last few days had been great, and the long ride was exhausting, spite of the hope which kept him up. Yet how different was the pain and weariness from that which he had endured on the summer day when he had last ridden along that road. His heart danced within him as he galloped on, past the wayside cottages, through the village where the children had given him the water, over the heathy plain, till at length the cross-roads were reached, and he knew that there was but a mile to Mondisfield.

The horse began to show symptoms of fatigue, for

he had had a hard journey, and but little rest; and as to the rider, he was so worn out that he could hardly keep his seat. He bent low over the horse's neck, too weary to sit upright, and yet, spite of all, his heart was bounding with happiness. Had he not been so physically exhausted, he would have sung aloud for very gladness. They were going at a foot pace, for the ground sloped a little, when all at once they came to the old black barn by the road-side. Hugo's heart gave a great throb of joy as he caught sight of it. Then slowly they rounded the corner, and came into sight of the three elm-trees at the gate of Mondisfield Park.

"My God!" he exclaimed. "My God!"

Griffith might have been shocked, yet the ejaculation was but the natural outburst of a heart filled to overflowing with long-deferred joy.

For on the grassy mound at the foot of the trees sat Joyce. Joyce, with her light curls gently stirred by the wind, her sweet face gravely bent over a hatful of primroses, which she was sorting and tying in bunches. Very sweet but very wistful, did she look. He had time to note the change in her ere she looked up, indeed he was close to her before she became aware of the horse's hoofs on the road, and raised her eyes to see whether by chance it might be the post with a letter from her father.

Ah, what was this? She saw him, she recognised him, but yet made no movement towards him, uttered no cry of joy, smiled no smile of relief; but, rising to her feet, stood, with wide-open eyes and blanched face,

clutching at one of the trees as though to support herself. She was not glad to see him; she was terrified. Oh, what had happened? There surely could be but one thing which would make her fear to meet him.

He was conscious of a sharp stab of pain at his heart, then of a wild, blind impulse which made him throw himself from his horse and rush towards her.

"Joyce!" he cried, "Joyce! my love! my love!"

She shrank back, trembling, white, terrified. It was more than he could endure; with a low cry he fell forward—fell on the grass at her feet.

CHAPTER XIX.

UNDER THE APPLE-TREES.

Wept they had, alas the while!
But now tears themselves did smile,
While their eyes, by love directed,
Interchangeably reflected.

SIR PHILIP SYDNEY.

IN those days, at any rate in those remote country districts, the belief in ghosts was much more prevalent than in the nineteeth century. Joyce, looking up from her primroses on that spring afternoon, and seeing before her what she took to be a white phantom horse, with the wraith of her lover, shrank back in unconquerable dread. Her heart beat so fast that it nearly stifled her, she stared in dread fascination at that spectral figure, which was Hugo, and yet which was not Hugo, for the face was pale and transparent, the eyes shone strangely, he looked altogether unearthly.

It was now five months since the tidings of his death had reached her, the news-letter which contradicted this intelligence had been lost in one of the winter storms, Mary's letter had shared the same fate, it was impossible that she could think this sudden return anything but an apparition from the other world, or an hallucination of the brain.

The rapture in her lover's face, the radiant joy de-

picted there, his changed voice, his altered form, all tended to confirm her mistake; strangely enough it was not until she saw that look of joy replaced by one of agony that she began to doubt,—not until she saw him fall to the ground at her feet that she was suddenly convinced that this was Hugo in the flesh, no dread visitant from another world, but her own lover, wearied with a long journey, worn with illness and imprisonment.

She burst into tears, and, hurrying forward, managed to turn his face to the light, hoping that the fresh spring wind would revive him: she chafed his cold hands, she called to him, broken-hearted to think what pain she must unwittingly have given him,—how cruel a welcome had been his.

And so presently, amid rushing and booming in his ears as once more he struggled back to life, Hugo became aware of a sweet voice broken with sobs. How piteous and yet how delicious it was! he could not stir, he dreaded breaking that magic spell.

"Hugo! Hugo!" she cried. "Dear love! Sweetheart! How cold, how hateful, I must have seemed to you! Oh, how could I think it your wraith? Yet they told me you were dead, Hugo. Ah, you stir, you sigh! Dear love, speak to me—speak!"

Kneeling beside him on the grass, she rained tears and kisses on his face; he opened his eyes; was it only the vision that had so often come to him in Newgate, of Joyce kneeling beside him in the copse by the Suffolk roadside on the day of the duel? He looked at the sweet, tear- stained face, and knew how different the vision was, for now she was his own—all his own! At the thought new life, new strength took possession

of him. He sprang up, wroth with himself for having alarmed her. She had thought him dead, and his sudden return was almost enough to kill her. At the thought he was once again all strength and manly tenderness.

"My dear one, did they send you false tidings of my death?" he cried. "Had I but known I would have written, would not for the world have broken on you thus suddenly."

She wanted no explanation, it was enough for her to feel his arms round her, enough to know that he was alive, free, and once more at Mondisfield.

There was a timeless pause, into which no fears or cares obtruded themselves, all but love and joy were crowded out; the two so long parted had each other once more, and were unconscious of aught else in the world. It was the white horse which at length startled Joyce into some recollection of place.

They were close to the public road; a vague instinct of danger came to trouble her perfect peace.

"Dear one," she said, "are you safe from pursuit?"

"I cannot tell for how long," he said, with a sigh. "But at present I am safe. For the next day or two I may remain here, if your father will permit me."

"My father is abroad, at Amsterdam. You must come and let my mother bid you welcome," said Joyce. "Do not let us linger so near the road, it may be prudent to keep your visit from the village folk."

"You are right," he said, anxiety once more returning to him. And yet there was a certain sweetness in feeling that she shared in the anxiety, there was bliss in seeing how already she thought for him, planned

for him. He led in the white horse, which all this time had been dining comfortably on the long grass by the wayside, and Joyce walked beside him up the drive till they came in sight of the dear old house, with its brown-tiled roof, its salmon-pink front, its familiar windows. He told her some of the details of his escape, and then they conferred together as to the best way of making his presence known to Mrs. Wharncliffe. In the end, Joyce persuaded him to let her run on quickly to the house, while he left his horse in the stable-yard. He could hardly bear to let her go out of his sight, but she was afraid the sudden shock might be bad for her mother, and, remembering how her father had bid her on that last night to be in all things her mother's helper, she could not even now let her happiness make her careless.

They were all of them country girls, could ride, run, and swim to perfection; but Joyce had never run so fast as on that day; her cheeks were glowing, her eyes beaming with joy, when she threw open the door of the south parlour. Mrs. Wharncliffe could only look at her in mute astonishment.

"Mother, dear," said Joyce, kneeling beside her, and trying to speak calmly, "there is no fresh news from father, but yet good news has come to-day to Mondisfield."

"Has the post been here?" asked Mrs. Wharncliffe.

"Not the post," said Joyce. "Much better than a mere letter. Oh, mother, darling, it was all a mistake; the news-letter did but publish a false rumour about Hugo. He is alive, he is free, he is here!"

Waiting only for her mother's close embrace,

scarcely hearing her words of surprise and delight, Joyce flew away, for her quick ear had detected steps upon the gravel outside. In another minute she returned; Mrs. Wharncliffe had risen to meet them, but paused, thinking perhaps it were well that her welcome of Hugo should be in the south parlour rather than at the front door. Once more the door was opened; she saw her little girl flushed, eager, radiant with happiness, and beside her, holding her hand, walked Hugo. She gave him a mother's greeting, then drew back a step, looking at him with a long, searching look. It was Hugo, yet not Hugo. Her feeling was, after all, not unlike Joyce's when she had first caught sight of him. The dreamy, philosophic youth, the boy who had yielded to that dread temptation in the gallery, the lad who had afterwards so nearly succumbed to his brother's will when Colonel Wharncliffe lay in hiding, was no more. Not a year had passed since that dread summer day, but the time had been long enough with Hugo. He looked many years older; he had come back to Mondisfield a man. The broad forehead and the quiet eyes were as pure as ever, but shone with a light that was new and strange; the loyalty which had once belonged solely to Randolph had deepened and widened. He was no longer the blind tool of another, but the devoted love, the noble constancy, had been turned into its true course.

It is ever those who are willing to lose their life that shall verily find it; and that which was true and good, even though misdirected in the old life, shall be truer and better in the new. For man's life is like a stream; pain and trial are but the dams which drive

back the water to its rightful channel—and that which was pure and sparkling on its way to the black morass is pure and bright and a thousandfold stronger when, turned in its course, it joins the river and is borne on seawards.

"Hugo," said Mrs. Wharncliffe, with a smile, after the first greetings and questions were over, "will you blame me if I treat you now at once as my son? In truth I was in sore need of one to help me, for in three days' time we are to leave this place and to rejoin my husband."

"You are to go to Holland!" exclaimed Hugo, with delight. "Then you will let me travel with you, and serve you so far as I am able. I do not think my brother is likely to insist on exhuming my body, and in no other way is the truth likely to be betrayed, therefore I do not think my presence could in any way endanger you."

"In truth you will be the greatest comfort," said Mrs. Wharncliffe "for you know the world and the ways of travelling, whereas I for many years have never been further than to St. Edmondsbury in my own coach. But, come! we must not keep you here talking of the future, I will show you to the guest-chamber, and you, little Joyce, run and bid them bring in supper speedily. Hugo must be hungry after his long ride."

Hugo changed his dusty travelling dress for one of the fresh suits which the Denhams had prepared for him. He took great pleasure in donning clothes which had never seen the inside of Newgate, and the mere consciousness that he was once more in a free, open, country house was in itself exquisite. How pure and

sweet the old guest-chamber seemed to him, how fresh the wainscoted walls, the chintz curtains, the white bed in its deep recess. And about all was that indescribable smell of the country which, ever noticeable to townbred folk, was doubly delicious to Hugo after his long imprisonment. It made him think of the scene in the House Beautiful, which he knew almost by heart from constant reading:—"The pilgrim they laid in a large, upper chamber, whose window opened towards the sun-rising; the name of the chamber was Peace."

Presently in the country stillness he caught the sounds of a child's merry voice, and knew that it must be little Evelyn. Going down the broad oak staircase he made his way to the hall, but, before any painful recollections could return to him, his thoughts were altogether diverted by the eager welcome which he received from every one of his cousins. They could not make enough of him, the joy of his return from what they had deemed the grave overpowered their natural shyness. Taken up with the anxiety to do honour to the man who had saved their father they forgot themselves, forgot to wonder whether he would think them rustic and countrified, forgot to be afraid of the courtly London gentleman even when most conscious how different he was from the bluff, country squires around. It was worth all that Hugo had been through to sit at that cheerful supper-table in the old hall with those happy faces beaming on him, with Joyce by his side, with the mother at the head of the table, anxious and careworn, but yet with such deep relief on her brow.

Later on Mrs. Wharncliffe sat with him in the north parlour, and he gave her a more detailed account of

his imprisonment than he had cared to give before the rest of the family. Then when her questions had all been answered, and there came a momentary pause in the conversation, he raised his quiet grey eyes to her face with the question which he had been longing to put to her ever since his arrival.

"Joyce has told you of our love, madam," he began, steadying his voice with some difficulty. "Your welcome makes me hope that you will not wholly forbid my suit. Will you pardon me for having spoken to her ere asking your consent? I thought I should never see her again—I was carried away—I could not keep silence."

"I will not say that I did not regret it at first," said Mrs. Wharncliffe, smiling. "I deemed Joyce over young. But I do not blame you for speaking that day —I well understand that you could not bear to leave the place without telling her."

"Yes, it was that," said Hugo, eagerly. "The going away for ever as I thought and never telling her that 'twas love of her that made it sweet, that 'twas love of her that gave me strength to resist."

"And are you still sure of your own mind?" asked Mrs. Wharncliffe. "You have seen much of the world, you have doubtless met many women more brilliant than my little country maid. Are you quite sure that you do well, in all seriousness, to ask her to be your wife?"

"Of that I could never doubt," he said, eagerly. "My only doubt is whether I am fit for her. I can never forget how in this house I was once a treacherous guest, how all this misery hath been wrought by me."

Looking at him Mrs. Wharncliffe saw that it was not alone the illness and the hardships of Newgate which had made him so many years older. Men do not repent as Hugo had repented, and yet bear no traces of the agony. There was something reverential in her manner as she kissed his forehead.

"My dear son," she said, "did you deem yourself wholly fit, perhaps I might hesitate. But methinks you have learnt in these months that which to my mind makes all the pain and misery worth while. Right gladly shall I entrust to you my little maid."

So the next morning, when Joyce went out with her basket of grain to feed the pigeons, Hugo strolled out into the pleasance. The turf felt like velvet beneath his feet, the thick box hedge, with its sweet, indescribable smell, brought back to his remembrance the grassy walks in the garden at Penshurst; but that morning even sorrow was sweet, he could think of his friend as at peace, working perhaps in some larger sphere and safe for ever from his enemies. Musing thus he passed the willow arbour and the sun-dial, and made his way along the grassy apple-walk.

Presently a whirr of wings made him look through the trees to the red-tiled pigeon-cote. There was a sudden dispersion, for the pigeons had had their breakfast, and Joyce with her empty basket appeared at the end of the walk. She wore a white linen gown with large puffed sleeves, and in her waistband she had fastened a little bunch of primroses; her sunny hair was hidden by a blue French hood, all but the curls which invariably strayed over her rounded forehead.

She saw him and smiled, and the beautiful colour rose in her cheeks.

As he watched her framed in that sweet vista of green grass and overarching trees laden with pink and white blossom, he knew that for him there could be in the whole world no fairer sight. They met without a word, with only one long, silent embrace. Then he put her gently from him, much as he had done on the summer day in the north parlour when recollections of Randolph had broken in upon that momentary bliss.

"Will you spare me a little time," he asked, "now that the pigeons are fed? There is much that I would fain say to you."

"Then say it here," she said, smiling, "for this is the place of all others I love best."

They sat down on the grassy bank by the side of the moat, but Hugo's words did not come readily. For the first time Joyce felt a little afraid of him. Half shyly she took the primroses from her band and fastened them in his doublet, then made as though she would have taken them away again.

"Do you take back your gifts?" he asked, smiling.

"No, but you shall have other flowers, violets, anemones, but not primroses. They make me think of the time beneath the elms when I did not know you. Dear love! I shall never forgive myself that cold greeting. I shall ever hate the sight of primroses."

"Nay, hate them not," he said, quietly. "And, in truth, they meet my case right well. Do you know, my heart, the lines which the poet Carew wrote on the primrose?"

Joyce did not know them; the only poets she knew were Milton and Shakespeare. She listened intently while her lover repeated the sweet old poem:

"'Ask me why I send you here
This firstling of the infant year;
Ask me why I send to you
This primrose all bepearled with dew;
I straight will whisper in your ears,
The sweets of love are washed with tears.
Ask me why this flower doth show
So yellow green, and sickly too;
Ask me why the stalk is weak
And bending, yet it doth not break;
I must tell you these discover
What doubts and fears are in a lover.'"

"'Tis beautiful; but what have you to do with doubts and fears?" said Joyce. "You may lay aside all fear of pursuit for to-day, at least. And the doubts and fears of a lover! Why, Hugo, you can never have those. Have I ever given you cause to be troubled with those?"

There was such a heavenly light in her eyes raised to his, such exquisite tenderness in the dimpled face, with its tiny mouth and rounded cheeks, that it was all Hugo could do not to fold her once more in that close embrace.

"Dear love," he said, after a silence, "there is no need to tell you that you have all my heart,—that I have loved you ever since our first meeting. But it is but fitting that you should once more gravely consider whether you do well to give yourself to me. Remember that you are now free—free as ever—for my letter writ in Newgate unloosed you from any promise you

made before. Your mother gives me leave to speak to you thus openly,—will you listen?"

"Why would you wish me to?" asked Joyce, looking frightened.

"For your own sake, my heart. Because I cannot bear to think that in a hasty moment, or from a generous impulse, or perchance from some false notion that I had done aught for your father, you should give me the rich treasure of your love, and hereafter live to repent it."

She put her hand before his lips.

"I will not let you say such things!" she exclaimed, with mingled indignation and tenderness.

"Nay, hear me out," he said, kissing her fingers as he drew them down. "You must dismiss from your mind all the sweet charity, all the tender excuses you have hitherto made for me; you must consider whether you are in very truth willing to be the wife of a man who was once guilty of a grave crime,—whether you are willing to share with him exile, and perchance disgrace. My dear one, my dear one, how can I bear the thought of this for you? You who ought to have the bravest, the most unsullied heart in exchange! Oh! Joyce, love is not all joy; it is pain—bitter pain!"

"Yes," she said, in a choked voice, "that is true; but the pain is not all on your side, Hugo."

"Then think it calmly over, as I would have you do," he cried. "Tell me, an you will, that I had better go hence. You shall never be sacrificed to some impulse of pity, some wish to spare me suffering."

"Do you think that to send you hence would make

me happier?" she asked. "When 'I am myself my own fever and pain,' as you sang last night. Oh, Hugo, when will you understand that I love you! Methinks the pain of love is the pain of one's own unworthiness."

"Make me pure as your own sweet self!" he cried.

But she silenced him with a kiss. And thus, by the side of the moat, and under shelter of the apple-blossom, they sealed their betrothal.

CHAPTER XX.

AN UNEXPECTED ARRIVAL.

What? I! I love! I sue! I seek a wife!
Love's Labour Lost.

LATE that afternoon, Damaris and Robina, returning from a farewell visit to one of the neighbours, and emerging from the ash-walk, were surprised and alarmed to see a stranger riding through the park. He reined in his horse at sight of them, pausing by the second gate, which opened on to the bridge. Damaris was a brave girl, but she was very much frightened, for she thought the stranger might have come in search of Hugo. She even feared it might be Randolph himself. On nearer view, however, she was reassured as to this last terror, but her manner was cold and distant as she offered to open the gate for the new-comer. Rather to her dismay, he hastily dismounted.

"Do not dream of troubling yourself," he said, with more show of gallantry than she liked. "In truth, I did but pause to ask you whether this is indeed Mondisfield Hall."

"Ay, sir," she replied coldly, "this is Mondisfield. But my father is absent."

"So I am informed, but my errand is not with him, but with Mr. Hugo Wharncliffe." The stranger smiled.

Damaris trembled. Her worst fears were confirmed.

Hugo's escape had then been discovered, and this gentleman—in all probability a constable in disguise—had come to bear him back to gaol.

"Mr. Hugo Wharncliffe?" she asked, doubtfully, gaining time for thought, and also deferring the evil day.

"Ay, Hugo Wharncliffe. He is here, is he not?"

"Who can have told you that he is here?" exclaimed Damaris. "Mr. Hugo Wharncliffe hath been in gaol these many months, and we are but lately informed that his remains were to be buried by Sir William Denham in one of the City churches. Which church was it to be, Robina?"

"St. Mary's," said Robina, briskly. "No, it was not though, an I mistake not, the messenger said 'twas to be in St. Clement Dane's."

The stranger laughed uncontrollably.

"Ay, ay, his London remains were interred with pomp and solemnity at noon yesterday. But the best part of him escaped, and should ere now have arrived here. Fair maiden, you are very slow to trust me! And in good time here comes my friend to vindicate my character."

At that moment Hugo and Joyce came through the doorway in the red brick wall, leading from the kitchen garden to the bowling-green. Damaris turned pale, and in her anxiety looked so lovely that Denham hastened to reassure her.

"Do not be afraid!" he cried. "I am his friend." Then, as she still looked troubled and perplexed, he hurried forward, cursing his folly.

"Come, Hugo!" he cried. "Vindicate my honour,

—and tell your fair kinswoman that I was one of those who bore you from Newgate. I' faith! she takes me for a constable in disguise—for a wolf in sheep's clothing—for a foe to be baffled and silenced and scouted."

The two young men greeted each other warmly, and then followed the series of introductions to each of which Denham replied by a sweeping bow which amused the country girls and made them slightly apprehensive about their curtsies.

"And will you pardon me for having affrighted you?" he asked, turning with one of his humorous looks to Damaris.

"You should have spoken out plainly at once, sir," said Damaris, with severity.

Denham made a gesture of mock despair and turned from her to his friend.

"Tell Mistress Damaris that I henceforth forswear the sin of frivolity and idle jesting!" he exclaimed. "But, odds-fish! my dear boy, how could I help but continue in a strain which served so excellently to draw forth her wit and her beauty." Then, as they were out of earshot, "Egad, Hugo, you have surely made a mistake betwixt those sisters!"

Hugo laughed.

"I am glad you think so!" he replied, merrily. "Go in and win."

"'I love my love with a D,'" quoted Denham, "'because she's delightsome. I hate her with a D because she's disdainful.'" Then, leaving Hugo and rejoining the group on the bridge. "Fair Mistress Damaris, I beg a thousand pardons for having caused you any

uneasiness. An I crave your pardon on my bended knees, will you let bygones be bygones?"

"Come," said Hugo, laughing, "we will take your horse to the stable, and Robina will apprise Mrs. Wharncliffe of your arrival."

So he and Joyce went away with the steed, and Rupert and Damaris were left alone on the bridge to make the peace as best they could. Denham was enraptured with her fresh healthful beauty, and charmed with her downright honesty and quiet self-possession. She was unlike any girl he had seen before. The Puritan household, too, impressed him not a little—it was all so novel; and though he had to walk warily, Damaris made up for the sense of restraint.

"I'm dog-tired, Hugo!" he exclaimed, when at night he and his friend found themselves alone together; "I have walked delicately like Agag, I have been soft and pliable as a sucking-pig, a turtle-dove, a Puritan of Puritans. Never an oath this whole blessed day,—and yet,"—here he relieved himself by a few strong expletives—"yet the fair Damaris frowns on me—treats me as a reprobate. 'Tis hard! 'tis cruel hard!"

"Come out to Holland, and woo her," said Hugo. "She would make you a right good wife."

Denham made a comical grimace.

"Nay, matrimony is too solemn for me. 'Twould depress me; 'tis too grave a risk for one of my temperament."

"Very well, then, leave Mondisfield at once. An you trifle with one of my kinswomen, I'll never forgive you, Denham, not though I owe you my freedom and

my happiness. For, look you, these are country girls, and—thank heaven!—they are unused to gallantry and court manners. An you go on making love to Mistress Damaris, she will take you at your word and perchance you'll break her heart for her."

"Heaven forfend!" said Denham, devoutly. "But yet the holy state of matrimony, Hugo, is a thought which terrifies me. Where would be the freedom I had of yore, the days with the scourers, the——"

"They would be in the past, and a good thing too," said Hugo, promptly.

"But," hesitated Denham, with a comical dismay in his face. "But d—— it all, Hugo, I fear she's a tongue!"

"Ay, and one that'll keep yours in order, I warrant," said Hugo, laughing. "I'll dance at your wedding, Denham,—it's no use your kicking against Fate. Mark my words, you'll be a Benedick ere many moons have waned. But, come, a truce to this nonsense. Tell me more of Randolph. Did he suspect naught?"

"Naught. We rode from Bishop-Stortford to London grave as mutes at a funeral, though, luckily for me, at a rattling pace. Then, solemnly alighting at my father's house, we made all speed to see your remains, which of course had been buried that morning."

"What said Randolph?"

"He was closeted with my father for some time, but I heard not precisely what passed betwixt them. Only my father told me afterwards that he seemed like one crushed beneath a heavy load; that he assured him again and again that he had never ceased to care for

you, and had fully meant, after a time, to procure your release."

Hugo sighed. It pained him terribly to be obliged to allow his brother to believe in his death.

"Do you think it will never be safe to tell him?" he asked, wistfully.

"Why, man alive! no!" cried Denham, aghast at the notion. "'Twould bring half a score of people into trouble, and would undo us all. He would be so mad with rage at being duped, that he would kill you, would challenge the rest of us, would ruin Scroop, and stir up the very devil."

Hugo was fain to acquiesce in the truth of this speech. But the thought of his brother cast a dark shadow over his sunny future.

CHAPTER XXI.

JOYCE'S JOURNAL.

If we be two, we two are so,
  As stiff twin-compasses are two;
Thy soul, the first foot, makes no show
  To move, but does if the other do.

And though thine is the centre sit,
  Yet when my other far doth roam,
Thine leans and harkens after it,
  And grows erect as mine comes home.

Such thou must be to me, who must
  Like the other foot obliquely run;
Thy firmness makes my circle just,
  And me to end where I begun.
DR. DONNE.

So after all, my journal ends not in grief but in rejoicing; not in thoughts of Hugo's death, but in the glad news of his return. For right skilfully his friends rescued him from gaol, making as though he were dead, and then, free and safe once more he made his way from London to Mondisfield, reaching us one glad spring day towards sun-down.

My dear love is changed. He is much more beautiful; he hath suffered so much that all say he looks more like a man of thirty than one not yet of age. He has grown terribly thin, and his brow seems broader, and his cheeks more hollow, and his lips straighter and

more spare. When I first saw him, he seemed all eyes, so worn and wasted was he with pain and fatigue. But there is much more change in him than this change that I chronicle in his features. Only it is more hard to put into words. I suppose there is nothing like solitude for teaching us that we are not solitary,—nothing like weakness for making us realise what strength may be ours. It seems to me that Newgate hath done this for Hugo. He went away a brave youth, showing his repentance in deeds rather than in words. He hath come back a God-like man. What hath passed in the interval, no one will ever know. And that methinks is as it should be, since our Lord said men were to be known by their fruits, not by chattering to all the world about the precise time and manner in which the sap came to their branch. And the using this simile reminds me of some words which Hugo let fall to-day. I was saying to him as we walked among the woods, how, even in my sorrow, it had made me happy to see the trees coming to life again and growing green after the long cold winter.

"Ay," he said, "yet they were coming to life long before you saw any signs of it. 'Tis in mid-winter that the sap begins to rise, when the plants and trees have had a rest, and when, having been forced for a time to be inactive, they are ready and longing for more work."

"I never thought the things grew in the winter, I said."

"Trees and men," he replied, smiling. "'Tis no bad thing to be for a time bereft of all outward things. As good Mr. Herbert saith,

"'O foolish man, where are thine eyes?
How hast thou lost them in a crowd of cares?'"

And then he told me a little about his former life in London, of how he had rushed from one study to another, or from one pleasure to another, of how happy his full free life had been until all at once he found himself plunged into Newgate with neither books nor friends, and knew that his happiness had all depended on such outward things. And then, he said, when that worst time of all came, and he was cast into a horrible dungeon, the thought of Mr. Francis Bampfield, with whom he had lived the previous month, kept returning to him.

"I had not hearkened much to his sermons and discussions," he said, "for such things never had much attraction for me, but I thought of his face, which, spite of all his sufferings, was the cheerfullest you ever saw."

And so one thing and another helped him, till he learned not to chafe at the misery and loneliness—and I fancy it must have been in that dungeon that he became what he now is. Not that he said anything about it in direct words, but when I asked him many questions as to what the dungeon was like and so forth, and then shuddered at his description of the cold and damp and filth—though I knew he kept back the worst details from me—then he said that he would not have me sickened by the thought of his hardships, which might be put into words, while the comfort he had had never could be told. And a most beautiful look came into his eyes as he said that, spite of the wretchedness, which he allowed had been very great, some of the happiest moments of his life had been spent there.

I hope I shall not "lose my eyes in a crowd of cares," but indeed there is so much on hand just now, such a rare stir and bustle and excitement in our usually quiet life, that it is a little hard to make time to think. However, I shall try, else I can never be fit to be Hugo's wife.

What with packing and tidying, putting the house in order, laying by the china, and making preparations for the journey, the days seem very full, and then there is Rupert Denham in the house, who contriveth to waste much of our time, which, however, we cannot grudge him, when we remember all that he hath done for us. I like him, he is so merry and full of fun, and so devoted to Hugo. I said to him to-day that they seemed more like brothers than friends; and at that he grew quite grave all in a minute, and said, in a low voice.

"Fair Mistress Joyce, do you think that there is indeed any chance that we may one day be brothers indeed?"

Which speech put me to the blush; for I saw at once what he meant—since no one can help but know that he greatly admires our Damaris. And, since the descendants will perhaps wish to know the end of this love tale as well as of mine, I shall take the journal with me and finish it in Holland.

AMSTERDAM, September, 1684.

At last I can find time to write, and must indeed make all speed to do so before the freshness of things passes from my mind. And yet I do not think any-

thing that has passed this happy time will fade away from my memory. The leaving Mondisfield was sad, but yet I could not but feel that we should return some day, and that helped to lessen the pain of leaving. We all set out at dawn on one cold April morning, wishing to make as much progress that day as possible, my mother and we five elder ones inside the coach, and little Evelyn behind with nurse and Tabitha, while Hugo and Rupert rode on in front, coming now and again to the window to ask how we fared. How slowly the old family coach rumbled along! And as we got further from home, and especially when the twilight began to gather, my mother looked so anxious and nervous that even we girls began to tremble and to remember all the horrible tales we had heard of highwaymen.

Just in the darkest part of the road, when great beech-trees overshadowed us on every side, and my heart began to quake, my dear love rode up to the coach side, and though it was awkward for him to guide his horse in so narrow a way, rode alongside of us till we were out of the wood, talking so briskly all the time of other matters that we forgot our fear, and indeed were quite merry by the time we reached the town of Hadleigh, where we lay that night.

It made me very happy to see how my mother leant upon Hugo, how she left the management of all to him. There was something about him that always won respect and liking from strangers, though his manner was so quiet that one would have thought he would have attracted no notice. But, however it was, it always came about that where Rupert's orders were often

saucily received or perhaps neglected, ostlers, servants, landlords and all waited on Hugo's slightest word.

And what care he took of us all the journey! I shall always love to think of it. The second day was bright and sunshiny as the first. We set off again early in the morning. Rupert still continuing with us, since he said he must see us safely on board the vessel at Harwich. He looked very doleful at the prospect of the parting, and all that day kept gathering posies for Damaris and handing them in at the window with so tragic an air that I could have found it in my heart to laugh had I not felt rather sorry for him, since Damaris received all his offerings with an unconcerned air that would have tried the patience of Job—at least, if he had been in love it would.

Hugo brought flowers for the rest of us, having no coy ladylove to propitiate with offerings. To my mother he brought violets, to Betty cowslips, to Frances primroses, to Robina—who scorned anything so feminine as flowers—an enormous dandelion which made everyone laugh, and to me a lovely handful of bluebells and delicate white starwort, fringed round with fern-leaves.

At noon we paused to bait the horses and to dine. I noticed then that Hugo looked very weary, but he made light of it, and leaving Rupert to wait upon Damaris, hastened into the inn to give the orders, and to see that everything was made comfortable for us. But when we sat down to dine he excused himself, and lay back on the wooden settle in the corner, looking so ill that I was terrified, and ere long he fell into one of

his shivering fits, and we knew he was attacked once more by the ague.

What a talking and confusion arose when it was discovered! Everyone suggested some different remedy or plan. Rupert declared it was impossible to proceed, and that we must pass the night at the inn, which methinks was as much with a view to himself as his friend; Nurse talked of herb tea and hot blankets, while the landlady declared that a perfect cure for the ague was to sit with the legs in a deep churn full of hot milk, and to sip carduus posset.

I shall never forget Hugo's face when he heard this remedy proposed. He got up, wrapped his cloak around him, took up his hat, and ordered the horses to be brought round. Then, when the landlady was out of earshot, he said to my mother,

"You do not remember that I am wholly unused to luxuries of this sort. I cannot hear of hindering you on your journey."

My mother was much perplexed, but, knowing that there might be some risk to Hugo himself if we lingered any longer in England, she allowed him to have his way, only insisting that he must come inside the coach, and let one of us girls ride. He was loth to do this, but in the end was forced to consent; and so it fell about, to Rupert's great content, that a pillion was put upon his horse, and that Damaris had to ride to Harwich behind him, while Hugo's horse, laden with such gear as we could fasten to the empty saddle, trotted behind the coach. I think no one regretted the change; I know I was glad enough of it, while

Rupert became as merry as a grig, and even Damaris relented a little, and showed him more kindness than she had hitherto done.

And so all that afternoon we lumbered along slowly enough through the country lanes and roads, Hugo very silent, and, I fear, suffering much, though he never complained. Once, when my mother lamented that we had not more warm wraps with us, he said, with a smile, that the cushioned seat of a coach was Paradise when compared with the damp stones of a dungeon, and, pressing my hand closely, that he wanted for nothing. Still, though he made light of all the discomforts, I did feel very glad when the lights of Harwich shone out in the distance, and when at length we drove up the street and halted at the door of an inn.

As Rupert passed us, I saw that an old man walked beside his horse and talked with him; then, as the coach stopped, he hurried forward, and even in the dim light I recognised at once, from Hugo's description of him, that this must be his dear old servant Jeremiah. He was evidently much distressed to see his master's plight, but he said scarce anything about it, from which I gather that, knowing my dear love well, he has learnt his ways, and knows that Hugo dislikes of all things any stir, bustle, or fuss.

"When doth the next ship sail for Amsterdam?" asked Hugo, leaning forward with flushed face and glittering eyes.

"To-morrow morning, master," said the old servant.

Hugo looked much relieved on hearing this, and allowed himself to be taken into the inn without more

delay, leaning hard on Jeremiah's arm, and leaving Rupert to see to our comfort, which I must say he did with the utmost zeal.

I was so glad to have the right to nurse Hugo. The landlady at the inn, a very kindly body, made me a cup of hot posset for him, and I carried it up to his chamber, where Jeremiah received me somewhat doubtfully, till Hugo, catching sight of his face, introduced me to him as his future mistress, whereupon the old man nearly made me cry with his pretty speeches. He is a dear old Puritan fellow, and was enchanted that his master meant to take to wife one of the right sort, as he expressed it. I only wish I were as good as he seems to think me. He left us at length with the remark that I bid fair to be as handy a nurse as Mistress Mary Denham, and a Puritan to boot, which he made bold to say was a great advantage.

"Why doth he not approve of Mistress Denham?" I asked. "She did more for you than I have done, or can hope to do."

"Jeremiah likes her well," replied Hugo, "but disapproves of her gay dresses, of her dancing, theatre-going, and so forth."

"Yet she is very good?" I asked.

"Yes," he replied. "I have good reason to know that."

And then he told me sundry things about Mary Denham which I shall not set down here, only they made me feel towards her as to no other woman on earth, and that evening I wrote her a letter, which Rupert promised to deliver safely into her keeping. I am grieved that the letter she wrote me should have

been lost, but yet the writing hath served to prove to us her generous love, and some day, when we return to England, I hope to become acquainted with her.

My dear love was better the next morning, and able to bid a cheerful farewell to his friends and to dear Old England. Poor Rupert looked blank enough —indeed, I thought we should never have got him off the ship in time. He was the very last to leave, and returned twice to kiss Damaris' hand before all the people, which made her blush crimson, yet I noticed that she forbore to scold him, for which I was glad, since he looked so miserable. I even began to think that perhaps Damaris cared for him a little bit in return—at least, she looked very grave and dismal the rest of the day; but, after all, that may have had naught to do with it, for most of the passengers began to look grave ere long, and soon the deck of the ship was deserted, and Hugo and I had it all to ourselves, for which, I fear, we were selfishly glad. How he enjoyed the sailing! I think I never knew before how some people can enjoy till I was with him; and certainly I had never before realised what imprisonment must be. The great expanse of rolling sea, the great over-arching dome of blue, the salt sea-wind, the rapid motion, were all bliss to him. The next day we were becalmed for eight or nine hours, much to the annoyance of the passengers; but Hugo and I were too happy to care, and indeed storm or calm was all one to us so long as we had each other. At length, one sunny spring afternoon, we really reached Amsterdam. I suppose the others had found the journey tedious; it had not been tedious to me, but of course I, like all the

rest, was overjoyed at the thought of seeing my father again.

It had been impossible to apprise him of the exact day of our arrival, since all was so uncertain, so that in the end we took him by surprise, arriving at his lodging in the Keiser's Graft, and walking in upon him at his afternoon meal. How his face lit up at sight of us! And what a welcome we had to be sure! The good housewife, and her daughter, and the maids, all bustling about and making much of us, and chattering in their outlandish Dutch tongue till we were well-nigh deafened. As to our trunks and other effects, they might have been left to the thieves or lost on the quay, had not Hugo looked after them all, making himself understood and obeyed somehow, and doing a large share of the fetching and carrying himself, which is a way he has, I see.

Then, when the first greetings were over, my mother told my father the good news of Hugo's safety, and with that he hastened out to find him, and I, slipping my hand into his, went too. Hurrying down the broad, shallow stairs, which were washed so white one almost feared to tread on them, we came upon one who bore a large box on his shoulders. My father was passing him, taking for granted that it must be some porter, but I checked him.

"You look for Hugo, father," I said, laughing. "He is under this box!"

My father turned with a quick exclamation. Hugo set down his burden, and, tossing back his long hair, raised a slightly flushed face to my father's. I can

never forget the look on their faces as they greeted each other. My father is, as a rule, a reserved and quiet man, but he was so much moved at sight of Hugo that his customary manner wholly deserted him.

However, I know not that I can set down all that passed betwixt them, neither can I enter into details of all that happy time. True we were in exile, but then we were together. My father was safe, my dear love alive and well, my mother happy and content. Those were sunny days for us all, and I shall ever love the dear old city, with its noble buildings, its sweet. clean houses, which so well repay the daily washings of the housewives, its streets planted on either side with stately lime-trees, and its intersecting canals with their wealth of shipping. But, truth to tell, I have no longer time for writing of journals, for there is much needle-work on hand.

As soon as Hugo had grown strong again, he was eager to find some work by which he could support himself; and this was readily found for him, seeing that my father hath made many acquaintances in the place. Hugo hath accepted a post as secretary to the learned Professor Ruysch, who is a professor of anatomy and botany here, and hath taken a great fancy to my love, who is precisely fitted to help him in his labours, having long been accustomed to men of science and their ways. Professor Ruysch hath been very kind to us, and hath given Hugo a most liberal salary. He is a fine-looking man of five-and-forty, and has the most charming daughter, named Rachel, who, though she is but twenty, can paint flowers and fruit as no one else can paint them. She is already one of our greatest

friends, but indeed, did I once begin to describe all the people of Amsterdam who have been kind to us, I should never have done, and since we are already preparing for two weddings, with suspicions of a third looming in the distance, I must lay down my pen and take up my needle, else Hugo will have an ill-clad wife, and Damaris set up house with unhemmed table-linen.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE "BRILOFT."

And thus the whirligig of time brings in his revenges.
Twelfth Night.

A GREATER change than from the quiet Suffolk Hall to the busy foreign city can hardly be imagined. It speedily wrought a difference in the quiet country girls; they became less shy and retiring, though maintaining to the last a certain freshness and simplicity which had a great charm. In spite of Robina's protestations that they were very happy as they were, and wanted no tiresome menfolk to unsettle them, changes speedily came to the house in the Keiser's Graft. Rupert Denham lost no time in sending to Colonel Wharncliffe a formal request for the hand of his second daughter, and after some hesitation and a lengthy correspondence the father at length consented to a betrothal, his scruples being finally overcome by Hugo's argument that Rupert only wanted a good wife to make him all that could be wished.

The city was crowded with English refugees, and although Colonel Wharncliffe held aloof from the more revolutionary party among them, and would give no countenance to the scheme already beginning to be discussed of a rising in favour of the Duke of Monmouth, he was too able a man not to be much sought after.

His house was the rendezvous of the cleverest men in Amsterdam, and the marriage which Joyce had seen looming in the distance was between Betty and one of the most frequent visitors, the son of a certain Herr Oylbrook, a wealthy Dutch merchant.

Robina groaned, and voted the future brothers-in-law an intolerable nuisance; but she helped, nevertheless, in the busy preparations of that autumn, and behaved discreetly at the double wedding which took place in December, Betty's marriage being delayed until the new year.

The festivities were over, and Hugo and Denham, having been well content to waive any ceremonies not in accord with Puritan decorum, were going home the next day from a long afternoon's skating, impatient to return to their brides, when at the door of the house in the Keiser's Graft Hugo paused.

"I ought to see Professor Ruysch," he said. "He may perchance need me to-morrow. I will speak with him and be with you anon."

"Where doth he live? Is it not near the 'Briloft'?"

"Yes, will you walk on with me?"

"Not I!" said Rupert, with a laugh. "There is Damaris standing at the window, and have I not been two hours absent already! But look you, if you pass the 'Briloft,' as I think you do, just call for my bill. I was there two nights, and would fain bear a good character in this place as one who is never in debt."

Hugo smiled, knowing full well that the only opinion in the city for which Denham cared two straws was the opinion of his wife. The two friends parted unconcernedly, Hugo making his way to the professor's

house, and encountering the great man on his doorstep elaborately scraping his boots that the cleanly housewife might not scold him.

Spite of the care of his daughter, Professor Ruysch looked as if his clothes did not belong to him. His long wig was pushed awry, the feather in his hat was old and draggled, one end of his lace cravat was longer than the other, and there was about him an air of shabby, careless untidiness. But his face was fine; the features large and strongly marked, the mouth firm, the chin very prominent, and the broad forehead furrowed with hard thought. He greeted Hugo merrily and would not hear of his returning to work on the following day, but bade him, with a kindly smile, go home to his pretty bride, and leave the botany to take care of itself. Pleased and relieved by this interview, Hugo made his way home again, not however forgetting Rupert's commission.

As he walked along the busy streets which were already growing dusk, with lights beginning to shine out in the windows, he wondered to himself whether anyone in that great city was as happy that day as he was. He thought of his little bride, of the happy future which lay before them, of his recovered liberty, of his congenial work with Professor Ruysch, of his restored health. The associations of Amsterdam were so sweet to him, that he forgot as he walked beside the canals under the giant lime-trees, that he was after all an exile, that the people who passed by him were not his countrymen, and that for the present he was quite cut off from fulfilling Sydney's dream and serving his country.

Such thoughts were not likely to occur to him on the day after his marriage; his face was all aglow with the afternoon's skating, his heart aglow with happiness, when he crossed the street and entered the "Briloft," a little impatient of anything which hindered his return to Joyce.

The "Briloft" was a kind of tavern, the property of a very wealthy Anabaptist. He was shown upstairs by one of the attendants, and left in a sort of hall or antechamber, while the servant went to procure the bill. The place was noted for its quaint devices, but Hugo had seen them before, had with Joyce admired the fountains in this upper room, and listened to the wonderful chime of "purselan dishes," which rung changes and tunes by clock work. Hanging lamps here and there made the place a perfect fairyland; but he soon wearied of the glistening white foam of the fountains and the sweetness of the chimes, and, growing impatient of the delay, which in truth had been considerable, he determined to seek the attendant and remonstrate with him on his slowness. The man had disappeared into a lighted chamber at the end of the hall, and Hugo made his way to the open doorway, and walked into what was apparently a public sitting-room. The servant, however, was not there, and he was just going to retrace his steps, imagining the room to be empty, when a sound came from the further end as of a goose-quill on paper, and, glancing once more in the direction, he made out in the dim candlelight the figure of a gentle man seated at a table writing. He drew a little nearer, perchance it might be the manager making out Denham's bill, perchance it might be a guest who knew the

ways of the place and could direct him; he advanced some half-dozen paces, then suddenly halted, unable to go on or to retreat, unable to move a muscle, paralysed for the time being by the horror of the discovery he had made. For at that table, directing a folded letter, sat his brother!

"What time does the post go forth?" asked Randolph, having heard steps in the room, and taking for granted it was but one of the attendants.

There was no answer; he looked up haughtily, wroth at receiving no attention.

Hugo turned deathly pale, for in one horrible flash of perception he had realised what this meeting involved. It meant the end of his freedom, it meant separation from his wife, it meant danger to Colonel Wharncliffe, and perhaps ruin to all who had aided in his escape. But move he could not. He stood rooted to the spot, his pale features fixed, and revealing only by their haggard look the mental anguish which he endured.

Randolph looked up, then with a cry sprang to his feet. In the dusky room only a few paces from him there stood the last apparition which he would have chosen to see. He, as a disciple of Hobbes, had been wont to mock at ghost stories; but he mocked no longer, his heart beat so fast that it half choked him, he gasped for breath, clutched at the table for support. Had he not mourned over the brother, whom he had practically murdered, these eight months? Had he not on that spring day hastened to view his coffin in the vault of the city church? Had he not caused a tablet to be engraved to his memory, and piled adjective upon ad-

jective in the description of his virtues? And now suddenly in this Dutch tavern his spirit appeared to molest him. He was the more startled and horrified, because he knew that there was a reason why Hugo's ghost should seek him at this particular time; he was on the eve of a duel, and he made no doubt that his brother had appeared to warn him of his coming fate.

In an agony of fear and remorse he was seized with a yet greater fear that the spirit would go away without speaking to him.

"Hugo!" he gasped, "Hugo, for God's sake speak to me!"

Still there was silence, but the face seemed to grow less cold and fixed; for in truth Hugo perceived from Randolph's terror that he, like Joyce on first catching sight of him, took him for a disembodied spirit. He saw one last hope of escape. Still keeping his eyes fixed on his brother he moved back a few steps.

"Stay!" cried Randolph. "If you have any pity on me, stay! Say at least that you pardon me. I have repented, Hugo; repented of all."

"Repentance should be in deed rather than word," said Hugo. To Randolph's excited fancy his voice sounded strange and hollow.

"Only tell me how I can show it in deed, and I will bless you for ever!" he cried.

"Swear," said Hugo, "that you will procure Colonel Wharncliffe a safe return to his estate."

With a gesture of authority he pointed to his brother's sword, and with trembling hands Randolph drew it from its scabbard.

"I swear that I will procure Francis Wharncliffe a

safe return to his possessions, and never more molest him or his, so help me God."

The strong man's voice was weak and tremulous, his face was ashy. Even in the midst of his frightful anxiety Hugo could not help marvelling at the curious reversal in their mutual positions. That he should command Randolph, that he should assume that tone of authority, while his brother bowed submissively to his will, and even trembled before him, this was passing strange! The old spell was so entirely broken, however, that, although he knew the terrible risk he ran, although aware that the instant Randolph ceased to believe him to be merely a spirit he would assume his former bearing, he felt no dread, no self-distrust, no fear now that his brother's will would overpower his and force him into treachery against Colonel Wharncliffe. All that was in the far past, he stood now calm and intrepid, chained to the spot, not by the sudden shock of surprise and horror, but by the love for his brother which had outlasted all else.

"Tell me at least that you forgive me!" repeated Randolph. "Do not go without one word of comfort."

"I forgave you long ago," he replied, quietly, while there came over his face a look which made Randolph bow his head and press his hands hard over his eyes.

"Tell me," he said, after a pause, looking up once more—"tell me what fate awaits me on the morrow. I have called out John Southland. Is that the reason you are come? Do you warn me of death?"

Grief unspeakable expressed itself in Hugo's face; he forgot everything save that Randolph stood in mortal peril, and had called out a man who had never been

known to miss his aim. He could no longer endure this hampered intercourse, he must break through the dreary farce and declare himself.

Breathlessly Randolph watched the sudden change which came over the face of his brother; in the look of grief and distress he read his approaching fate, there was no mistaking the strong emotion which betrayed itself in the pale face, and it was with a suppressed sob that the spectral figure came hurriedly forward with outstretched hands. Randolph recoiled; but the figure still advanced, its sad eyes fixed on him haunting him in that terrible way in which they had haunted him these many months. But this was no dream, in another moment those chill hands must touch his, this death-wraith was not to be repulsed. He drew nearer and yet nearer, speaking never a word; to Randolph the moments seemed like hours, the silence of the room weighed him down with horrible oppression, the eyes which reproached him, just because they were not in themselves reproachful, seemed to strike a blow at his heart. This silence was intolerable—maddening! Human nature could endure it no longer. With a cry he fell—would have fallen to the ground had not those spectral hands laid hold of him. He was just conscious enough to be aware of this; he felt himself guided down and laid gently on the floor; an interval of dimness, then the cold hands were at his throat untying his cravat. The horror of that was too much for him—he fainted away.

And now there arose for Hugo one last struggle. Should he avail himself of this momentary unconsciousness and rush from the "Briloft?" Should he save

himself and leave his brother? Should he go back to his little wife and treat this strange scene as though it were but some nightmare? Vividly there came back to him the recollection of a very different interview in a London inn; he remembered the unspeakable misery of his return to life, the awful loneliness, the helpless looking for one from whom he had been separated for ever, the desolation that had overwhelmed him.

Could he go and leave Randolph to this? True the risk was great, but should he not venture it? While he still hesitated Randolph recovered his senses.

"Do not be afraid," said Hugo, as once more the distressed looked dawned in his brother's eyes. "I am no death-wraith. You were mistaken; I never died at all. I am living at Amsterdam with my wife's family."

The sentence had been quietly begun, but as he spoke those last words his voice shook. He folded his arms, and stood silently waiting for Randolph's reply.

How would he take this revelation? Would pride and anger triumph? Or did he indeed still care for him?

Randolph stared at him for some moments without speaking; then he seized his hand as though to assure himself finally, that his eyes and ears were not deceiving him.

"Flesh and blood, you see," said Hugo, with a faint smile.

"I do not understand!" cried Randolph. "You are here in Amsterdam, you did not die—you have a wife! How in heaven's name did you manage it all?"

Hugo drew forward a chair, and, sitting down, gave Randolph a detailed account of his escape from New-

gate, of his illness on the previous night, of the scene with the Governor, of how they had contrived to carry him to Sir William Denham's in a coffin, of his ride to Bishop-Stortford, and of how he had only just had time to get into hiding before Randolph came down to breakfast in the morning.

"You did but save yourself by the skin of your teeth," said the listener, who had followed the story with breathless interest. "Had I come upon you at table I should assuredly have been in such a heat that you would have been carried back to Newgate!"

"Yes," said Hugo, "I knew there was no chance for me, otherwise I could not have borne to stay there witnessing your remorse."

"Then how, in heaven's name, is it that you do not dread revealing the truth to me now?" exclaimed Randolph.

"I do not know, for I have much more to lose."

"Why did you not effect an escape while I lay there in the swoon?"

"I could not leave you thus, and I knew that you could only harm me since your oath bound you to serve Colonel Wharncliffe."

"And your wife?"

"You could not harm her, she is Colonel Wharncliffe's daughter—we were but married yesterday."

Again his voice trembled slightly. Randolph continued, quickly,

"Do you forget that you are still a minor? Would it not harm her if I carried you off to gaol again?"

Hugo's lips turned white.

"I trusted you," he replied.

There was a pathos in those three words which could not fail to touch even such a man as Randolph. He said nothing, but held out his hand. Hugo grasped it, and the two were reconciled.

After that Randolph breathed more freely, relapsing indeed into his usual manner, and refusing somewhat haughtily to go to the house in the Keiser's Graft.

"I will abide by my oath," he said; "I will never again molest Francis Wharncliffe, though I came hither to see if I could not get hold of him by hook or by crook. But he is my enemy still, and will ever be. How I have cursed him since I heard the news of your death! My one consolation lay in this, that it was in truth he who had murdered you, not I."

Hugo thought this a curious repentance, but he said nothing. There was a pause, which he broke by asking the time of the duel.

"To-morrow at sunrise," said Randolph. "John Southland and I fell out at play last night."

"Cannot you patch up your quarrel honourably without fighting?"

"No; that is out of the question."

"Very well, then I must go out with you."

This spontaneous offer broke down Randolph's pride; with a keen pang he remembered how he had last looked on Hugo at Whitehall, knowing that he was leaving him to go forth alone to the most horrible of punishments; he remembered, too, another duel when he had acted as Sir Peregrine Blake's second, and had spoken words which must have wounded Hugo to the quick.

"You forgive me," he said, huskily. "I own that I need forgiveness. If only this affair does not cost me

my life, you shall see how I will make good the past to you."

And thus, after arranging for the morrow, they parted, Hugo in the end forgetting Denham's bill, which had been the cause of his coming to the tavern. He was greatly shaken by all that he had been through; he walked the streets of Amsterdam like one in a dream, hardly knowing whether he were relieved or burdened by this interview. Joyce had been watching for him, and flew downstairs to open the great door and welcome him, but something in his face frightened her. He caught her in his arms and kissed her passionately.

"What is it, dear heart?" she asked. "What makes you so pale and worn? Hath Professor Ruysch quarrelled with you? What has happened?"

He did not reply till they had reached their room, then his calm gave way. The danger past, he realised how great had been the peril, how awful the anxiety, how priceless were the treasures of love, and life, and freedom. Gradually Joyce drew from him all that had happened. Long ago she had ceased to feel harshly towards Randolph; the others might occasionally drop some word of strong dislike, or severely censure the family foe, but Joyce never. For Christ's commands are never impossible, and an enemy really prayed for becomes in time beloved.

"If he is wounded on the morrow," she said, gently; "if, as you fear, it should go against him, then bring him here, Hugo."

And Hugo promised that he would.

CHAPTER XXIII.

RECONCILED.

But justice, though her dome she doe prolong,
Yet at the last she will her owne cause right.
SPENSER.

NATURALLY enough the news caused not a little perturbation in the family; Joyce, who was more nearly concerned than the others, took it all far more quietly; but then she was much under her husband's influence, and saw things from his point of view. Her chief anxiety was now for Randolph's safety. Hugo had gone forth at dawn looking terribly anxious, and since then Joyce had become so firmly convinced that Randolph would be brought back wounded that she had made ready a room for him, put new sheets of her own spinning upon the bed, and placed ready to hand all that she thought might be needed by the leech.

Then she stationed herself at the window to watch. It was a cold, grey winter's morning; the church bells sounded loud and clear, but they had to-day a melancholy cadence, at least she fancied so, although but yesterday they had seemed like the faint echoes of her great joy. Two half-frozen looking robins were flying from twig to twig of the trees opposite; vendors of fish and fruit went by with heavy baskets hanging

from the wooden yoke round their shoulders. Bustling housewives hurried to the market, wearing great flopping hats, little round capes, and hoops in their skirts. Joyce saw this in a kind of dream, while all the time her thoughts were far away. She thought much of her husband, she recalled vividly her first sight of him, when he had tripped up Sir Peregrine Blake and freed her from his unwelcome attentions. She thought of that duel two years before, and of the great changes wrought by it. She wondered much whether this duel would be as fruitful of results.

All at once she sprang to her feet, for, looking down the street, she caught sight of a litter being borne by four men. Her husband was nowhere to be seen; she hurried down, terribly frightened, and was glad enough to encounter her old nurse on the stairs.

"Whither away, honey?" said the nurse, caressingly. "Why, what is the matter?"

"Come!" she cried, breathlessly. "Come and help, here is my husband's brother wounded."

She threw open the door; the bearers seemed in some doubt, but had come to a standstill.

"Yes, yes," she explained, quickly, in Dutch. "It is all right, it is my brother-in-law—bring him in."

As she spoke her eyes met those of the wounded man; he was past speaking, but she read in his expression that he longed to protest against being carried into this house.

"You will not mind, you will come here for Hugo's sake," she said, bending over him. The troubled, agonised look deepened, but he seemed reluctantly to

assent, and the bearers took him to the chamber which Joyce had made ready.

The nurse fetched strong restoratives, and in a little time he recovered himself enough to speak.

"Who are you?" he asked, fixing his eyes on Joyce, and apparently forgetting that she had spoken to him as he was borne into the house.

"I am your sister, Joyce," she said, quietly.

And then, because he looked so ill and miserable, and because he belonged to Hugo, she stooped down and kissed him shyly on the cheek.

He turned away with a groan.

Joyce knew his face well, it had stamped itself upon her brain on that terrible summer day in the hall at Mondisfield. But she saw now, what she had been unable to see then, that certain outlines of his face bore no little resemblance to Hugo. The expression had been so different that she had never till now noticed it—it deepened her grief for him, and intensified her pity. She felt, as she had never deemed it possible she should feel, that he really was her brother.

A gleam of pleasure came over Hugo's troubled face, as he entered with the leech whom he had been to summon, and caught sight of his wife in her new character of sick-nurse. But he made some excuse to draw her away from the alcove.

"You must not stay while the leech is at his work," he said. "Already you are looking pale and tired, as though you had not breakfasted."

"Not more so than you," she said, tenderly. "The duel went against him, then?"

"Yes, it was all over in less time than I can tell you of it. John Southland never yet missed his man. I knew Randolph had not a chance."

"But the leech may cure him," said Joyce.

"I think not," said Hugo, sadly.

His foreboding proved to be true. The leech tortured the wounded man for an hour or so, then gave him up, and told him bluntly that there was no hope for his life. Both surgery and manners were rough in those days.

Randolph was too strong a man not to take the news calmly, he had far too much of the Wharncliffe reserve to say one word of regret to his brother, or to utter one complaint; whatever the state of his mind, he was not likely to betray it to any living being, but Hugo took some comfort by his quick recollection, spite of his weakness and suffering, of the oath he had made on the previous night.

"Fetch hither your inkhorn," he said, when Hugo returned from bidding the leech farewell. "I must write at once to the King, else will you still have to remain in exile. Also I will ask him to grant a safe return to Francis Wharncliffe."

Hugo drew a chair to the bedside and wrote at his brother's dictation such a letter as could hardly fail to procure pardon for both of them, unless it chanced to find the King in an ill-humour. Should this happen he half feared that Scroop and the Denhams might get

into trouble, and this made him suggest a new idea to Randolph.

"You see," he began, "it will at once be known that Sir William Denham is compromised by my escape. How would it be, think you, to send this letter to London by Rupert Denham, and let Sir William himself if he thinks well bear it to the King, seeking a fit opportunity?"

"'Tis not an ill thought," said Randolph. "The King is fond of him, and respects him as a man of science. How comes Rupert Denham here?"

"He is but lately married to Damaris, Colonel Wharncliffe's second daughter."

"Denham married!—and to a Puritan maid! Good God! is the world coming to an end?" said Randolph, astonished and amused.

"There are Puritans and Puritans," said Hugo, smiling. "Also Denham is not what he once was. It would be asking a great deal of him to leave his bride and hasten to England, and yet I think he would do it."

"He would do it for you," said Randolph, with a touch of bitterness in his tone, "any one would do anything for you. Am not I sacrificing the wish of a lifetime, and helping my bitterest foe, for your sake? Here have I plotted and planned for years, yet in the end all my hopes are defeated by you,—I am conquered by you!" There was an extraordinary mixture of contempt and admiration in the last word; it was as though the two sides of Randolph's character were struggling together, and neither could obtain the mastery.

"You are not conquered by me but by God," said Hugo, speaking with an effort.

"God is out of fashion, Hobbes is all the rage," said Randolph, with a sarcastic smile. And after that he relapsed into silence. Hugo mused sadly over his words. He mused over Hugo's.

The shaking signature of the wounded man was duly affixed to the letter, and that very day Denham set sail for England. He fully realised the gravity of the situation, and willingly undertook the work for his friend, knowing that there was no one else who could manage it so well. Damaris cried her heart out, but would not for the world have kept her husband back. And in fact she was not much worse off than Joyce, since Hugo scarcely left his brother night or day, and when for brief moments she did see him alone, he was sad and harassed, and preoccupied. Had she not been able to help him in nursing Randolph she would have been miserable; but luckily the sick man had no objection to her presence, and, although she did not in the least know it, she had great influence with him. He would lie for hours watching her, as she sat just outside the alcove with her needle-work; he saw how she followed Hugo about with her eyes, how sweet was her face and how tender her voice when she spoke to him, how quietly and unobtrusively she made arrangements for him, laid cunning little plots to tempt him to rest or to eat, and allowed him to take the lion's share of the nursing, though, womanlike, she longed to have it all her own way.

He became very careful of the language he used in

her presence. He admitted to himself that Hugo was right and that there were Puritans and Puritans. He remembered with keen remorse how terribly he had made Joyce suffer. He wondered much whether she had forgiven him. One day Hugo, after a long night's watching, fell asleep in his chair by the bedside, and Joyce, stealing noiselessly into the alcove, spread a fur rug over him.

"You are not ashamed to be fond of your husband," remarked Randolph, with a touch of sarcasm in his voice. "An you go to court on your return, you had better not show it so plainly, else you and he will be the laughing-stock of the place."

For a minute Joyce made no reply, and, chafed by her silence, he said bitterly,

"Ah, it is all very well now, but by-and-by you will find that he's not the only fine young spark; then you'll look on marriage with other eyes."

She turned upon him with a sweet scorn not to be described in words, but perhaps realising that he was ill, and remembering how sad was the description her mother had given her of his past life, her eyes grew pitiful, and she said, with quiet dignity, as if making excuse for him,

"I see you know just nothing at all about it."

Randolph was silent. In all his life no one had spoken to him in such a way. He flushed deeply, but not with anger or resentment. Joyce finding the silence uncomfortable, added,

"And though I do not think I would mind being made a laughing-stock of for that reason, yet I do not

believe we shall be at the court more than can be helped."

"Has Hugo spoken of your return to England?"

"Yes, once he said a few words about it, just after Rupert had sailed."

"What did he say? What sort of life would he lead? When I am dead, you know, he will be next heir to Mondisfield."

"Yes, I know it; but he would not, I think, live at Mondisfield in my father's lifetime. He said something of being called to the Bar, and living quietly in London; then Damaris and I shall be near each other, and I shall learn to know Mistress Mary Denham and the little Duchess of Grafton, and Mr. Evelyn and his daughter. I should like to live in London."

"Hateful place!" said Randolph, bitterly.

"Is it hateful?" she asked, in surprise.

Something in her innocence and childlikeness softened him, he smiled a little as he looked into her clear blue eyes.

"It will not be hateful to you, my little sister," he said, kindly; "a place is what you yourself make it."

Hugo stirred in his sleep; she glanced round.

"We must talk more softly. I want him to sleep, for he looks weary."

"Yet he tells me he is stronger again, and hath had no return of the ague of late."

"No," she replied, "it is true, he is better, but they say that he will always feel the effects of what he has been through. He never can be quite what he was before Newgate."

She had so fully and freely forgiven Randolph, that she forgot at the moment that her words would convey to him any reproach.

"Joyce," he said, taking her hand, "Joyce, can you ever forgive me the suffering that I wrought for you both?"

Then Joyce, in her sweet unconscious way, told him how she had begun by hating him, and how her mother had first made her sorry for him, and then that, somehow—but she could not tell the manner of it—love and forgiveness had sprung up in her heart for him.

"Tell me, little sister," he said, when she paused, "tell me, is there aught that I can do now to please you or him? Is there aught that can make up in the slightest for the past?"

"There is one thing I should like you to do," said Joyce, promptly. "The leech says you might be borne into the next room. I should like you to see my father and the rest of us; I should like you to learn at last what my father is."

Randolph frowned. She could not have suggested anything more distasteful to him; however, he would not go back from what he had said, and consented the next day to be carried into the parlour.

And thus, strangely enough, his last hours were spent in the household of his lifelong foe, and for the first time he learnt, as Hugo had learnt in the gallery at Mondisfield, the charm of that family life. After the first plunge he made no more objections, and was carried daily into the sitting-room. He did not suffer much, but just died by inches, as is sometimes the

way with strong men. Every day the leech said, "This will certainly prove the last, the patient loses strength rapidly."

But still he lingered on, clinging to life in a way which astonished every one.

One afternoon his strong reserve melted a little, and turning to Hugo he said,

"I had great power over you once, Hugo. I could make you do almost anything; it was just by the force of my will I could do it. You marvel, all of you, why I linger so long in this wretched plight. I will tell you —it is because I will not die. I mean to live till Denham comes back with the King's message."

"You must not disturb yourself, even if his Majesty will not grant your request," said Hugo; "for see here, we are no worse off than we were before you came to Amsterdam. The city will not give us up; we are quite safe here."

"I know it, but I would fain have you return," said Randolph, sighing. "You were meant to be something other than clerk to a Dutch professor."

"If we do return," said Hugo, musingly, "I shall live in retirement. All public life is closed to me until the tide turns. But I think it will turn ere long. Things cannot go on as they are."

"Which means that when his Majesty and the Duke of York have passed off the scenes, you would——"

"I should endeavour to follow in the steps of him who was martyred last year. Should try to get into parliament, should spend my life so far as might be in working for the good of the people."

"Gallant sentiments," said a merry voice in the doorway, "brave words, mine Hugo, and just like yourself."

"What, Denham!" exclaimed both the brothers, in a breath. Hugo sprang forward to meet him, the dying man half raised himself with a momentary return of strength, while the old peremptory tone came back to his voice.

"What news do you bring?" he asked, impatiently.

But he had to wait for an answer, for Damaris had heard her husband's voice, and came running in from the next room to greet him, while little Evelyn proclaimed his advent to the whole household, so that by the time Rupert and Damaris had a word to spare for outsiders, the family were all gathered together. Joyce came bringing in the lamp, everyone crowded round Denham, with eager greetings and questions, they all talked at once, there was quite a babel in the usually quiet room, while Randolph, in his distant corner, lay chafing at the delay, and marvelling how Hugo could wait so patiently beside him while uncertain what his fate was to be.

It was Joyce who remembered the invalid, and drew Denham towards the couch.

"Come," she said, "Randolph cannot hear your tidings while we press around you thus; but it must be good news else he would not look so merry, would he, Hugo?" And she slipped her arm into her husband's.

"You saw his Majesty?" asked Randolph, quickly.

"Ay, ay, we saw him," said Denham, sobered by the great change which he, as a fresh comer, instantly

noticed in the sick man. "My father obtained an audience, and I went in with him to tell how you all pined away in exile and longed to return. As good luck would have it, we found the King in excellent humour, and I delivered your letter into his own hands, after he had duly swallowed my father's confession."

"What did he say to Sir William? Did he blame him much for having helped in my escape?" asked Hugo.

"No, luckily for us the story amused him, and you know you were always a favourite with him. 'Confound the young rascal!' he exclaimed, when we told him how that you were alive and well, and married to boot. 'Here have I been wasting prayers for his soul, deeming him in purgatory, when he was all the time enjoying himself over the water.'

"And then he asked whether you had married the lady of the handkerchief, and said he should expect to see you both at Whitehall. So after all, sir," turning with a smile to Randolph, "there is some chance that he may make his way at court, and that in a second wager I might be the loser."

But Hugo shook his head. Randolph did not reply, only with an air of content examined the written pardon which Denham had brought back with him. At length he looked up and said, with an air of effort,

"And what did his Majesty say to my petition for Colonel Wharncliffe?"

Denham produced another parchment.

"This will render Colonel Wharncliffe perfectly safe in returning to Mondisfield, no one will molest him

there so long as he does not mix himself up in public matters."

Randolph glanced at the document, then handed it to his kinsman.

"You run no risk in returning, sir," he said. "No one bore any ill will to you except myself: you might have been at Mondisfield now had it not been for me."

"All that is past and over," said the colonel, with grave kindness. "Do not let us unearth an evil which is both repented of and forgiven. And, children, let us, before separating thank Him who has been pleased to end our exile and permit us to go home."

Randolph looked on in much surprise; a great hush fell upon the room which just before had been so noisy; even Denham, merry, mischief-making Denham, knelt gravely with the rest of the family. An uneasy sense of loss stole over the dying man; he glanced round the wainscoted walls, the cheerful room with its blazing fire and mellow lamplight, he looked at little Evelyn, nestled up close to her mother, his eyes wandered from one to another, resting long upon Hugo and Joyce as they knelt hand in hand. What was it that he had somehow missed in life? What unknown gift did these kinsfolk of his possess which failed them neither in prosperity nor adversity?

His life was over, and he had miserably failed: he knew that he was passing into an unknown country, and he felt much as an emigrant might feel who is about to be landed on a foreign shore, with no capital, with no outfit, with no friends to greet him, and with no knowledge of the language.

And yet had he absolutely no knowledge?—did not the words which Colonel Wharncliffe was speaking bring back to him a far-away vision of his mother? The room grew hazy and indistinct; he thought he was at home, in the old home which had been desolated in the great plague year. Was it a dream that he was young and innocent once more?

Yes, for the mist rolled away, and he was back again in the present; for years past he had mocked at "innocency," and had not taken heed to the things that were right,—how was it likely that he should have "peace at the last?"

A less reserved man would have groaned aloud, but Randolph was silent; no sign escaped him of that most terrible pain—the torture of realising that a life wasted—ay, and worse than wasted—is over. In his anguish he looked at his brother. Hugo would live on and leave behind him a name beloved and honoured, —Hugo would leave the world better than he found it! How hideous did his own past look as it rose before him—rose in contrast with the other's happy future! Then, and not till then, did he realise in all its fulness the bitterness of death.

God Himself cannot give us back our lost opportunities.

So, in the "Golden Days," as now, were men led by suffering, by failure, by love, by life, and by death to the perception of their human weakness, their Divine strength.

Very still was the room where that final struggle

raged. Very calm was the colonel's voice as he spoke the closing words of their thanksgiving.

"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with us all. Amen."

A second voice joined faintly in the last word. They all of them noticed it, for in that Puritan household it was not the custom: they noticed it, and remembered it afterwards with comfort.

"You will be weary after this excitement," said Hugo, drawing near to the couch, while Joyce went to kiss and congratulate her father and mother, and Rupert and Damaris wandered off to the oriel window. "You must rest—we will take you back to——"

But there he broke off with a stifled exclamation of grief and awe.

His brother was dead.

THE END.

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